

An evaluation of previous and current methods and models
for researching Indigenous resource use and purposes,
with recommendations for 'best practice' research solutions



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Summary

This report is the sole work of the author Dr Maureen Fuary. The research and report writing was undertaken after an earlier draft report on the topic had been submitted by Glass and White (2007). The research involved an extensive search, evaluation and critique of the published and unpublished literature on models of research in the international, national, regional and local domains. A special focus was trained on models of engagement between researcher and the research group, including participatory and collaborative models of research in the social and geographical/ environmental sciences. The report provides an overview and discussion of these forms of research and makes recommendations about developing some 'best practice' models for researching resource use in the Wet Tropics.

Central to any research being undertaken on resource use in the Wet Tropics is the engagement of the appropriate Indigenous people. This engagement or active involvement in the research might range from people brokering the research project itself to being involved as full partners at every stage. There are a number of possibilities within these two ends of the spectrum. The nature and degree of research involvement will always depend on a number of factors, including: the research project itself; the desire of people to be involved in each project; and the skills base of all involved parties at the time.

Crucial to developing 'best practice' in research is the development of appropriate research protocols and agreements. Protocols need to be sufficiently adaptive instruments which can be modified to reflect the contingencies of each research project. However, at base level they could be comprised of key principles which would remain non-negotiable. This could include the requirement that there be:

- Clear guidelines about the project and its purpose;
- Clear agreement to proceed;
- Mutual respect and mutual responsibilities of the researcher and the Aboriginal owners of the Wet Tropics;
- Cooperative and equitable approaches to research which demonstrate respect for Rainforest Aboriginal people's intellectual and cultural property;
- Cooperative and equitable approaches to research which demonstrate respect for the intellectual property of researchers (be they Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal);
- Benefit-sharing;
- Clear agreement about the ownership and future uses of the research findings and data;
- Research which actively works towards 'bringing in' Indigenous or Traditional Knowledge with other forms of knowledge, namely the sciences or the social sciences;
- Foregrounding of rainforest Aboriginal people's rights and interests in the Wet Tropics, enabling their active involvement in the management of the World Heritage Area;
- An ongoing process of engagement;
- A commitment by all parties to disseminate research results in an appropriate way;
- The involvement of Aboriginal people from the very beginning of a project;
- A commitment of both parties to negotiate on equal terms;
- The ability for both parties to follow through with agreed outcomes;
- Processes to ensure that the right people to speak for country are consulted;
- Negotiations in an open and honest way;
- A commitment of both parties to work through difficulties together when they arise; and

- A clause to excuse either one or all parties from elements of the agreement should issues of conscience arise to which either party feels compelled to respond.

In particular the respective protocols and research agreements developed by Drs Melissa Nursey-Bray (2006) and Karen Martin (2006) offer us examples of how best practice models of research protocols might be developed. This is especially the case if the findings of the Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project (IFaMP) on the need for high level skills in negotiation and conflict resolution (Bauman 2006, 2007) are factored in to the process.

A related issue concerns the advantages of forging and maintaining strong institutional links and dialogue with bodies such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), museums, public libraries and archives. Such links would assist in the ongoing refinement of research protocols, models and management of projects, as well as developing a knowledge base on the location of materials about Aboriginal resource use in the Wet Tropics.

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Thanks are extended to Dr Rosemary Hill (CSIRO) and at James Cook University (JCU) to Dr Mike Wood, Ms Jenny Gabriel and Ms Linda Leftwich for discussions and directions about the report. Dr Karen Martin (Queensland University of Technology) kindly allowed me to read her PhD thesis which has yet to be catalogued at the JCU library. She put me in touch with Mr Chris Roberts of Balkanu Aboriginal Corporation, who went out of his way to make the thesis available. Ms Leah Talbot (Australian Conservation Foundation) and Ms Rhonda Brim (Djabugay Elder) permitted me to read Leah Talbot's Masters' thesis. Mr Bruce Lawson (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service) sent me a copy of Smallacombe *et al.* (2007), and Dr Lea Scherl (Nature Conservancy) alerted me to the UNESCO (LINKS) public forum in Cairns. At the forum Dr John Bradley (Monash University) directed me to the idea of 'transcultural research' being developed by Associate Professor Michael Christie at Charles Darwin University.

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Acronyms used in this report

AAS	Australian Anthropological Society
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ANU	Australian National University
ARC	Aboriginal Rainforest Council
ASA	Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth
BA (Hons)	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CHIMS	Cultural Heritage Information Mapping System
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Mapping Project
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research (Indonesia)
CRC-TREM	Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management (Rainforest CRC)
CRM	Cultural Resource Management
CSIRO-TLP	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation – Tropical Landscapes Program
DEH	Department of the Environment and Heritage (Commonwealth – now DEWHA)
DEWHA	Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (Commonwealth)
DNR&M	Department of Natural Resources and Mines (Queensland – see DNRandW)
DNR&W	Department of Natural Resources and Water (Queensland)
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (Queensland)
FNQ NRM Ltd	Far North Queensland Natural Resource Management Ltd (now Terrain NRM)
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IFaMP	Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project (undertaken by NTRU, 2003-2006)
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
IKRMNA	Indigenous Knowledge and Resource Management in Northern Australia (research project)
IP	Intellectual Property
IR	Indigenist / Indigenous Research
JCU	James Cook University
LINKS	Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (UNESCO)
MA	Master of Arts (a postgraduate qualification)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTSRF	Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility
NAILSMA	North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance
NCRM	Natural and Cultural Resource Management
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NQLC	North Queensland Land Council

NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NTRU	Native Title Research Unit (housed in AIATSIS)
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy (a postgraduate qualification)
QDATSIP	Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (Queensland)
PAR	Participatory Action Research
RRRC	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Ltd (implementing MTSRF)
RSPacS	Research School of Pacific Studies, ANU
Terrain NRM	Previously FNQ NRM Ltd
TEK	Traditional Environmental Knowledge
TKRP	Traditional Knowledge Recording Project
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WAFMA	Western Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Project
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organisation
WTAPPT	Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team
WTWHA	Wet Tropics World Heritage Area
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority (Commonwealth)

1. Terms of Reference

As part of the initiative of [Project 4.9.1 'Indigenous Landscapes of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area: Use, Planning and Management'](#), hosted by the Australian Government's Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility (MTSRF), this researcher worked within the parameters of Objective (a): *To understand Indigenous natural resource use within the Wet Tropics WHA through the completion of reviews and comparative assessments.*

Specifically, this desktop research addressed the following component of the Objective, to: 'Evaluate previous and current methods and models for researching Indigenous resource use and purposes, with recommendations for best practice research solutions'. A range of research models were evaluated and critiqued and are now presented in this report.

In July 2005 substantial funding from the Commonwealth Environment Research Facilities (CERF) programme was allocated for five years to the newly established Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility based at James Cook University in Cairns and Townsville (WTMA 2006) to:

"...ensure the health of North Queensland's public environmental assets – particularly the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and its catchments, tropical rainforests including the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA), and the Torres Strait – through the generation and transfer of world-class research and sharing knowledge.

Protection of the health of these environmental assets is a joint responsibility of governments, community and industry and needs the commitment of each if it is to be achieved. The MTSRF outcomes will support each of those parties in their endeavours to protect, conserve, sustainably use and manage North Queensland's public environmental assets." (RRRC 2006b)

The research program which specifically addresses issues of resource management and resource use in the Wet Tropics is [MTSRF Program 9 'Sustainable Use, Planning and Management of Tropical Rainforest Landscapes'](#). It comprises seven major research projects which relate to the requirements of MTSRF partners in the region: Indigenous groups, DEW, WTMA, FNQ NRM Ltd, ARC, industry and other stakeholders (MTSRF 2007: 235). The 'Indigenous Landscapes and the Aboriginal Rainforest Council' project (referred to hereafter as the 'Indigenous Landscapes Project') is being undertaken by researchers through James Cook University (JCU), led by Dr Michael (Mike) Wood. This report constitutes part of a larger Project 4.9.1 Milestone Report for the Indigenous Landscapes Project. The project team is currently comprised of Dr Mike Wood and Associate Professor Steve Turton (JCU), Dr Rosemary Hill (CSIRO), the traditional owners of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, Mr Russell Butler and Ms Allison Halliday (ARC), Mr Phillip Rist (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation), Dr Allan Dale (FNQ_NRM Ltd), and JCU Research Officer Ms Linda Leftwich (MTSRF 2007: 238).

1.1 Context of this Report

The watershed *Wet Tropics Management Authority Regional Agreement* between eighteen Aboriginal rainforest groups, WTMA, DEH, QPWS and DNR&M was signed in April 2005. Prior to the Regional Agreement being developed and signed a number of key policy documents and position papers were produced which highlighted the management of natural and cultural resources in the Wet Tropics and the importance of properly involving Rainforest

Aboriginal people. Collectively these documents contributed to the successful development of the Regional Agreement and have extended its application. They include the following:

- Fourmile, H. Schneirer, S. and Smith, A. (eds.) (1995) An Identification of Problems and Potential for Future Aboriginal Cultural Survival and Self-Determination in the Wet Tropics. Report to the Wet Tropics Management Authority, Cairns.
- Steering Committee (1998) [Which Way our Cultural Survival? Review of Aboriginal Involvement in the Management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area](#). Volume 1. Report prepared for the Wet Tropics Management Authority Board, Cairns (253pp.)
- WTMA (1998a) Wet Tropics Management Plan Section 62 Permit Assessment Guideline No. 3 – [Guidelines for Consulting Aboriginal People Particularly Concerned with Land in the Wet Tropics Area](#). Wet Tropics Management Authority, Cairns.
- WTMA (1998b) Wet Tropics Management Authority Protocol No. 1 – [Interim Protocols for Aboriginal Participation in Management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area](#). Wet Tropics Management Authority, Cairns.
- WTMA (2000) *Information Needs for Management*. Wet Tropics Management Authority, Cairns; and
- WTAPPT (2005) [Caring for Country and Culture – The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan](#). Rainforest CRC and FNQ NRM Ltd, Cairns.

The WTMA Regional Agreement set up the framework and conditions for the active involvement of Rainforest Aboriginal people in the management of the Wet Tropics, in concert with government agencies (WTMA 2006). It recognises the ‘rights and interests’ of Aboriginal people particularly in defining and negotiating:

“...their own priorities, needs and aspirations for management of the Wet Tropics. A cooperative and equitable approach between World Heritage management agencies and Rainforest Aboriginal people is of vital importance in achieving these principles.” (WTMA 2006)

The Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC) was established through the WTMA Regional Agreement (2005) as the peak organisation representing Rainforest Aboriginal people in areas of “land and cultural heritage matters” in the World Heritage Area and as the “statutory advisory committee to the WTMA Board” (WTMA 2006). It has “formally established links with NRM agencies and Aboriginal organisations including FNQ NRM Ltd” (WTAPPT 2005: 45).

The other feature of the Regional Agreement central to the research undertaken for this report is the commitment to:

“...participation in policy, planning, permitting and management through a set of principles / guidelines and very detailed protocols which outline appropriate ways to involve Rainforest Aboriginal people in World Heritage Management.” (WTMA 2006)

In this report I also work closely with and acknowledge the significance of the report *Caring for Country and Culture – The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan* (WTAPPT 2005). Like the WTMA Regional Agreement this is a landmark document clearly articulating strategies and actions for addressing research into Indigenous resource use, and the associated issues of Indigenous Knowledge, Intellectual Property and models of research.

2. Knowledge

Knowledge comes in many forms and can be classified as all or any of the following:

- As enlightenment;
- As power (see Section 2.1); and
- As property (see Sections 2.1 and 3.2).

Social scientists, such as anthropologists and sociologists understand that all knowledge is culturally and socially embedded. An example of embedded knowledge is knowledge which members of a society take for granted and don't usually question. This represents the bulk of knowledge in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike.

However, the form of knowledge-production where we look at what is known in order to develop further understandings of the world is only ever practised by a small number of people in any society. This is where knowledge becomes enquiry and enlightenment, be it Indigenous or non-Indigenous enquiry in its many forms. A researcher stands aside from embedded knowledge in order to wonder at it. In the social sciences for example, a process of enquiry called 'triangulation' is used to look at different aspects to a particular issue. By triangulating you can see where multiple angles intersect, and thus come to a new understanding. Triangulating different research findings and approaches can also be a very fruitful exercise¹. However, the majority of members of any society regularly react against these new, specialist understandings of what they have always 'taken for granted'.

There isn't an absolute, clear-cut distinction between Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and non-Indigenous Knowledge. Rather, there is a flow between them primarily because of the impacts of imperialism (Said 1994) and globalisation. Michael Christie and others (2007) refer to the 'global knowledge economy'. In the West, scientific forms of knowledge are regarded as dominant and dominating, and there are forms of resistance to them, e.g. critical theory (Fabian 2001; Agrawal 2002) feminist knowledge and research (e.g. Jaggar and Bordo 1989), and more recently Indigenist knowledge and research (e.g. Rigney 1997, 2001; Martin 2003, 2006; Talbot 2005; Smith 1999). All of these resistant 'knowledges' and research approaches share a powerful intention to dismantle and go beyond colonising and disempowering models of knowledge and research methods. Through developing and adopting different models, they try to move away from hierarchies of knowledge toward a research conversation or dialogue which can inform other approaches to knowledge and in so doing, lead to new understandings of the world.

2.1 The Knowledge-Power Dyad

From the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault (1970, 1978), social scientists understand that knowledge everywhere is related to its cultural context (that is, it is embedded) and to relations of power. Because of this relationship between knowledge and power, knowledge can be constraining, but it can also change, it can be resisted, and it can be empowering. Knowledge is always in flux: it is dynamic rather than static. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977) brought to our attention the 'value' of knowledge and its role as 'cultural capital'. The holding of knowledge is seen as a cultural advantage in all societies. When we combine 'knowledge as power' and 'knowledge as cultural capital' we see that whoever holds knowledge is essentially in a position of power or strength in Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies alike. Thus for some Indigenous scholars, challenging the premises of a Western scientific base is central to changing a power imbalance and opening up what is

¹ This was undertaken in the desktop research for this report.

seen and valued as knowledge and valued as research (see Section 4.2.4). Nursey-Bray (2005, 2006) skilfully articulates and emphasises the role power plays in negotiating agreements, especially in whole of government agreements with Aboriginal people over natural resource management (NRM).

2.1.1 Science and science

In Western economies and societies the form of knowledge most highly valued by powerful institutions is that of Science. Some of the disciplines included in Science, with a capital 'S' are Chemistry, Astronomy, Geology, Physics, Biology, Zoology, Botany, Marine Science, Geography², Environmental Science and Microbiology. In popular language they are sometimes referred to as 'Hard Science' (or 'real science'), being regarded as more accurate than many of the social sciences (Anthropology, History, Sociology). This is because they rely on the 'scientific method', with a basis of objectivity, experimental quantification and hypothesis testing.

While Science is just one form of knowledge, it is the most highly rewarded, financially and in terms of status, power and authority. It is very persuasive with its research findings and conclusions – both within academic institutions and within government departments, funding bodies, international NGOs and policy makers. Scientists use a universal language, and the power that goes with Science can be seen in the recognition it enjoys and the seriousness with which it is regarded. This is exemplified in research funding opportunities and the authority accorded its findings. While other 'sciences' have been given increased recognition in recent decades, such as the more qualitative Social Sciences and Humanities (sometimes pejoratively referred to as 'soft science'), this has only occurred through a strong push and lobbying within university departments.

Both the 'hard sciences' and 'soft sciences' have their relative strengths and weaknesses. It has been social scientists in the form of anthropologists who have always engaged face-to-face with Aboriginal people. Through employing participant-observation in fieldwork and other qualitative research methods, anthropologists focus on coming to understand each society, its values, meanings, relationships and practices, from within. It is only in recent years that scientists have begun to engage in more qualitative research with Aboriginal people, especially in relation to resource use and environmental management. Without a historically solid grounding in qualitative research methods, the science disciplines of geography and environmental science in particular have had to be very clear about how to get from 'point (a)' to 'point (b)' in a short period of time, generally without an intensive fieldwork period. Along with health professionals and health researchers (see NHMRC 2003, 2005) they have combined quantitative with qualitative approaches and have brought a fresh eye to methods of research with Aboriginal people.

It is from their recent research that most of the debates about developing good research protocols and agreements have emerged rather than from anthropologists who in general have taken their immersion in other cultures for granted and not spoken about or teased out their methodologies to a wider audience.

² Geography is not always considered as Science. In some universities it is regarded as a Social Science.

2.1.2 Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Science

Strategy 3: Develop and implement programs and projects that document knowledge and facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices.

Actions

- 3.1** Record and document knowledge of Country via books, databases, CDs, etc. (with appropriate ICPR protection).
- 3.2** Develop educational materials (books, CDs, internet, etc.) for both Aboriginal people and the broader community.
- 3.3** Develop and implement cultural programs, including camps, to bring Elders and young people together on Country to facilitate transmission of knowledge and cultural practices.

(WTAPPT 2005: 61)

Strategy 11: Document traditional knowledge of plants and animals (in a culturally appropriate way)

Actions

- 11.1** Resource and support Traditional Owners to coordinate the documentation of Aboriginal knowledge of plants and animals, including past and present distribution, cultural significance, customary management, use and threats (with appropriate recognition of ICPR).
- 11.2** Undertake research to establish the cultural significance and extent of the impact of introduced plants and animals on cultural values.
- 11.3** Determine the status and threats to culturally-significant plants and animals.

(WTAPPT 2005: 80)

Not surprisingly, while some Indigenous people are calling for the recognition of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) as Indigenous Science, in recognition of the power and authority accorded 'Science' (see Sections 2.1 and 2.1.1), others argue it is a distinctive form of knowledge in its own right that shouldn't be *reduced to* Science. While there are no hard and fast definitions of IK (see also Smallacombe *et al.* 2007), the following definition is a good entry point. Indigenous Knowledge refers to:

"...traditional practices and culture and the knowledge of plants and animals and of their methods of propagation; it includes expressions of cultural values, beliefs, rituals and community laws, and it includes knowledge regarding land and ecosystem management. It is more often unwritten and handed down orally from generation to generation, and it is transmitted and preserved in that way." (Dodson 2007: 3)

Smallacombe and others (2007: 7-9) assert that IK is both content and context, and that it is:

*"...best understood not as a discrete, stand-alone entity, but rather as tangible systems of knowledge, meanings, values and practices deeply embedded in Indigenous cultures...[IK is] the ways in which Indigenous people regard and act out their relationships with each other, with their lands and environments, and with their ancestors...It is also knowledge that relates to expressive aspects of Indigenous culture such as art, dance, song, story and ceremony...[It is] part of a living cultural tradition...[and it is] constantly validated, reaffirmed and renewed." (Smallacombe *et al.* 2007: 7-9)*

In specifically relating IK to resource use and management, which remains the key forum within which IK is discussed, the 1993 *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Articles 8, 10 and 11) and the 1994 Amendments set the conditions for this association and for subsequent

arguments about respecting 'customary rights and equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity' (Borrini-Feyerabend and Tarnowski 2005: 70).

In a paper on the deployment of IK by science, Arun Agrawal (2002) catalogues the process of 'scientisation' – particularisation, validation and generalisation by which 'useful bits' of knowledge are removed from their cultural context of beliefs, values and practices. When elements of IK are seen to be of scientific value and deployed more widely and universally, they are abstracted, validated and catalogued in generic, internationally accessible databases, which have proliferated since the 1990s. Their "Use value in combination with scientific validation invokes the power of protection" (2002: 292). In being reframed in the universal language of science, IK then loses its distinctiveness. These now protected, useful data are utilised in development and conservation domains, and Agrawal argues that removing 'scientifically' useful bits of knowledge from an IK system, removes them from what makes IK distinctive in the first place (see also Smallacombe *et al.* 2007). In these sorts of databases IK becomes a science:

"The efforts to document and scientise indigenous knowledges can, thus, be doubly unfortunate. One, they channel resources away from the more vital political task of transforming power relations. Two, they provide a means to more powerful social actors to appropriate useful indigenous knowledges..." (Agrawal 2002: 294-295)

Michael Christie (2006: 79) refers to this as a form of 'violence'. He argues that IK is more what people do, rather than what they have. This is because it is so embedded in everyday ways of living and being. Marie Roué and Douglas Nakashima (2002) demonstrate the power of ecological understanding and capacity to predict environmental outcomes when IK, in this case Cree knowledge, is examined in its unitary, cultural context rather than being removed from it as in the case above. There are obvious shortcomings in collapsing either science or IK into the other as illustrated by Agrawal (2002), and there are demonstrated strengths in recognising them as having differences but able to speak to each other, as revealed in the discussion by Roué and Nakashima (2002) (see also the discussion in Sections 4 and 5 of this report). In their report *Caring for Country and Culture: The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Management Plan*, the authors voice a similar stance by noting the greater recognition given in NRM to scientific knowledge (see also Sections 2.1 and 2.1.1). 'This is despite the fact that Aboriginal knowledge systems have been applied and utilised in the region since time immemorial' (WTAPPT 2005: 59).

Local Knowledge or Indigenous Knowledge is increasingly being discussed, investigated and incorporated into new research approaches. The UNESCO for example, has a dedicated section called LINKS (Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems), and in August 2007 held an 'International Experts Conference' and public forum in Cairns, Australia. Ms Henrietta Fourmile participated as one of the small number of experts, and Giringun hosted a field trip for the delegates to their land and sea country. One of the projects currently underway in the southern Wet Tropics is the *Giringun Aboriginal Corporation's Traditional Knowledge Recording* project (Pentecost 2007). See also Sections 4.2.3 and 5.2 of this report for details on the cultural mapping projects in train throughout the Wet Tropics.

The School of Australian Indigenous Knowledge Systems at Charles Darwin University is currently hosting an ARC (Australian Research Council) Linkage Grant, 'The Indigenous Knowledge Resource Management Northern Australia Project' (IKRMNA). Some of the research conducted to date concerns the uses and issues of digitised media (Christie *et al.* 2007; Scott 2004), associated issues of Intellectual Property (IP) when different knowledges are brought together (Verran *et al.* 2006), the development of and access to databases (Verran *et al.* 2006; Scott 2004), and the design of digital technologies for IK (Verran and Christie 2007).

Another research project looks at using the knowledge held by Aboriginal people in Western Arnhem Land about rock kangaroos to complement and extend the limited knowledge of the species in the scientific literature. Here an ethno-ecological approach involving scientists and local custodians has yielded a wealth of data to be used in the conservation and management of the four rock kangaroo species (Telfer and Garde 2006). Further, an emerging and particular approach to Indigenous Knowledge is the adoption of an Indigenist Research stance by some contemporary Indigenous researchers (Rigney 1997, 2001; Martin 2003, 2006; Talbot 2005; Smith 1999). Research particularly by Karen Martin and Leah Talbot in two different areas of the Wet Tropics is discussed in Sections 3.2, 4.2.4, 5.2 and 5.2.1.

3. Research

3.1 Types of Research, Scale of Research

Whatever its type, research is a systematic process and involves methodology and theory. Methodology is the way we define problems and look for answers to these questions. It is:

“...how research is conducted...a natural science model of research ... searches for causes through [quantitative] methods ... that produce data amenable to statistical analysis...qualitative methodology [is designed] to collect descriptive data, people’s own words, and people’s behaviour ... Qualitative researchers develop concepts, insights and understandings from patterns in the data rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories.” (Taylor and Bogdan 1998: 3-7)

All research proceeds with the definition of an issue or ‘research problem’ that warrants investigation. Next a ‘literature review’ is undertaken to ascertain what is already known about the issue. On the basis of evaluating this material, including the ways in which other research has been undertaken and the limits or benefits of those research findings, the researcher formally develops her/his ‘research design’. They state how and why they are looking at an issue and what they will focus on. For some forms of research, the research proper may be predominantly carried out in a laboratory, and for yet others the world itself (e.g. the Wet Tropics) is a rich laboratory.

The research process is fluid and while time, personnel, equipment, travel, finances, and even subject areas place constraints on the researcher, they can also facilitate the research. The document *Keeping Research on Track: A Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples about Health Research Ethics* (NHMRC 2005) is very clear in delineating the steps of the research process. These are:

- Building relationships (between the researcher and the people);
- Conceptualisation – thinking (what both parties want from the research);
- Development and Approval (ethics applications, letter of support, research agreement);
- Data collection and Management (training; working ethically);
- Analysis – looking at the Meaning (by the researchers and community; feedback);
- Report writing;
- Dissemination – sharing the results (throughout the whole of the project); and
- Learning from our experience (evaluating the research process; improving next time).

There is also a section in this guide entitled ‘About research and researchers’, which looks at:

- Common types of research (such as surveys, experiments, quantitative and qualitative approaches);
- Ways of starting research (researcher-driven, government requested, community requested, and community-driven);
- Finding out about researchers (talking with people, asking the researcher, referees, publications); and

- Issues with ‘new’ researchers (do they intend to commit to relationships with key people; have the right values; have good intentions to involve people; understand the difficulties Indigenous people might have in research).

Within the Wet Tropics most of the research, which has been undertaken to date (see also Table 1 and Table 2 this report) and will be undertaken in the future, can be classified as:

- Strategic – such as Native Title or *Queensland Aboriginal Land Act* research;
- Community requested (genealogies; histories; biographies; community development; repatriation of cultural material; language work; mapping);
- Community driven (genealogies; histories; biographies; community development; repatriation of cultural material; language work; mapping);
- Rapid Assessment research performed under extremely tight deadlines, usually in the face of an emergency (such as a natural or cultural disaster; or in the face of development);
- Researcher requested research (such as PhD and Masters research; new research by someone with a long history of association with the people; research by people new to the area); and
- Government initiated research (as part of the Regional Agreement – negotiating management issues, access or further agreements; in consultancies such as fact-finding research for Native Title).

Whichever form it takes, the research aims, personnel, motivations, methodology, funding, budget, timelines and outcomes play a crucial role in its life cycle and how it looks. Each project will look different and be different. For example, research by a PhD student carried out over three years, is more likely to result in that researcher developing ‘cutting edge’ or ‘best practice’ models of research, or protocols, than one would see in a Rapid Assessment project, or in Native Title research. The latter is particularly unlikely given the legal and bureaucratic conventions for how Native Title evidence is gathered and presented. Likewise projects undertaken by people with a long history of working with Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics, such as Chris Anderson at Wujal Wujal (1979, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1988a, 1988b, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994, *in press*) and Rosemary Hill (Hill 2001; Hill *et al.* 1999; Hill *et al.* 2000; Hill and Smyth 1999; Hill and Yalanji People 2004), will start from a different baseline than research being undertaken there for the first time, such as by Melissa Nursey-Bray (2002, 2005, 2006) or Karen Martin (2003, 2006; Martin and Burungu Aboriginal Corporation 2002), or by researchers with family links to the community (e.g. Talbot 2005).

Whatever the research project there is real value in recognising and valuing different forms of research and knowledge for different contexts and outcomes, for different reasons, and in offering different angles and perspectives. There are very real strengths with the quantitative approach of most science as there are for a range of approaches in the social sciences in which a combination of a qualitative and/or quantitative approach is adopted. Neither should replace the other: a quantitative methodology can give insights that a qualitative approach cannot, and vice versa. Whichever the research though, there are fundamental issues about impacts and outcomes of the research that need addressing, not least of which is engagement with the community.

For example, in the landmark report *Which Way our Cultural Survival? The Review of Aboriginal Involvement in the Management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area*, the following statement was made:

“...the main concern of the Kuku Yalanji people was being made aware of what research is taking place and, wherever appropriate, the

provision of some form of community involvement. Other Bama groups have also expressed concern about where scientific researchers may be going, particularly in relation to sites of cultural significance, and what the research may eventually be used for. Where traditional ecological knowledge is collected, the issue of intellectual and cultural property rights becomes a priority.” (Steering Committee 1998: 170)

For research to occur there needs to be:

- Mutual respect and support;
- Clear guidelines about the project and its purpose;
- Clear agreement to proceed;
- Clarity and agreement about all sets of intellectual property, of the Aboriginal co-workers and of the key researcher;
- Agreement about the ownership and future use of the research findings and data. That is, who owns what (e.g. recorded stories, genealogies, texts, photos, designs, music, resource use, technologies) and what it can be used for; and
- Agreement that if issues of conscience arise parties can be excused from some elements of the agreement.

3.2 Ethics, Protocols and Agreements

Strategy 13: Increase the level of involvement of Traditional Owners in all levels of research, policy, planning and management arrangements for plants and animals.

Actions

13.5 Implement the ‘Rainforest Aboriginal involvement in Research’ component of the Wet Tropics regional Agreement to ensure that research commissioned by DNR&M, WTMA, EPA, and DEH in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area conforms with the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies .

13.6 Promote the use and adoption of the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies by all researchers and organisations that undertake research in the region.

(WTAPPT 2005: 81)

There has been a proliferation of ethics guidelines developed by research bodies and professional groups in the last twenty years (for a good sample see: AIATSIS 2000; AAS 2003; NHMRC 2003). While the AIATSIS *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies* are exceptionally good and represent best practice, there is not always a neat fit between what is stipulated in ethical research guidelines (institutionalised ethics) and actual practice (relational ethics). Ethics and ethical practice, like any research practice is an on-going and ever changing project, because it is so context-dependent. There are huge problems in assuming there can ever be “universal benchmarks of ethical behavior” on which to build universal or generic codes of ethics (Cannella and Lincoln 2007: 316).

The British based Association for Social Anthropologists in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth has set up a blog dedicated to discussing this (ASA 2007b), and the Chair provides a statement about ethics. He argues that because codes need to be so general, they are necessarily always written in an abstract and succinct way:

“They serve as a baseline for starting to think about ethical issues, but cannot of their nature encompass the complexities of concrete situations and the dilemmas of choice and positioning that

anthropologists routinely face as they navigate through a variety of intersecting fields of power and responsibility and start to consider how their own work both reflects and affects power relations ... The new initiative that we are... launching aims to promote a ... case-based, ethnographically grounded debate... Our vision is not one framed by a fixed code ... but of a far broader and constantly evolving dialogue that will address changing scenarios and new dilemmas as they arise.” (ASA 2007a)

In a good example of the limitations of institutional ethics, Karen Martin makes the following observation in her PhD research at Buru:

“Although the ethics approval for this research study had been granted by James Cook University I felt these didn’t adequately address matters of cultural safety and cultural respect, nor in observing cultural protocols in the context of research.” (Martin 2006: 180)

In general while it might look like a researcher is adhering to ethical requirements by ‘ticking every box’ (Cannella and Lincoln 2007), they may not be relating respectfully to the people amongst whom they are working. Watkins (2005: 440-1) notes that Codes of Ethics “have little meaning if they are believed to take the ‘place of meaningful ongoing communication with Indigenous groups’.” This is essentially an issue of ‘good faith’ and genuine respect. While attempts are taken institutionally to regulate for an ethical approach to research, this cannot be codified, because in essence, it is an issue of ethics, of morality.

“This global move toward regulation of research ethics as enterprise... can also result in the belief and the creation of an illusion that moral concerns, power issues, justice, protecting other human beings (and so on) have been addressed with no further need for concern.” (Cannella and Lincoln 2007: 316)

Rather than becoming bogged down in debates about the problems of universalising Codes of Ethics, we may find a way forward by thinking about Ethics and Research Ethics as a self-regulating process reflected in research protocols worked out between the researcher and the community within which s/he is working (see Martin 2006). Our focus can then be trained on encouraging researchers to:

- Treat others fairly and equitably;
- Examine their own moral stance; and undertake to
- Engage in an on-going ‘ethical dialogue and negotiation’ at ‘the core of [their] research practices. (Cannella and Lincoln 2007: 316-17; see also AAS 2003).

One of the greatest impacts of research on people can occur after the data gathering phase. While researchers may have behaved well in the field, what they do with the data afterward, how they speak about people or what they write can have very positive or very deleterious impacts (see AAS 2003; AIATSIS 2000). For instance, article 3.6 (b) in the AAS *Code of Ethics* states that controversy about the work of an anthropologist doesn’t usually arise because of actual physical harm caused, but rather from people sensing that their privacy has been intruded, or that they have “been wronged (for example, by having...to acquire self-knowledge which they did not seek or want” (see Section 2). This is where both protocols and research agreements can play a significant role. The terms ‘agreements’ and ‘protocols’ draw attention to the processual, on-going and developing nature of consent, which needs to

be regularly tested and checked throughout the life span of each research project (see also AAS 2003; AIATSIS 2000).

In her recent research Karen Martin has emphasised the importance of researcher honesty, respectfulness, responsibility and accountability (2006: 184-187). With the Burungu Kuku Yalanji she developed new protocols for her research, and a research agreement (see Section 5.2.1), which fore-grounded issues of researcher self-regulation (see above) and relatedness. In a different context Melissa Nursey-Bray drew upon a number of Ethics Codes to develop her own 'List of Principles of Ethical Research in Australian Aboriginal Communities' (2006). The six key components for her work with Hope Vale Aboriginal Community are:

1. To have conceptual understandings of the issues/ barriers facing Indigenous peoples in terms of developing capacity;
2. To have understanding of the social/ economic/ historical context of Indigenous peoples;
3. To be genuinely collaborative;
4. To look at developing a set or sets of research principles and/ or guidelines;
5. To develop a set of culturally appropriate criteria in order to determine success in research projects re their potential and outcomes; and
6. To fit into existing initiatives or pre-existing cultural mores or ways of doing things.

In addition she developed a 'Matrix of the Practices and Performance Indicators' and a "Matrix of Benefits resulting from my work" to guide the research she undertook at Hope Vale (see her Figures 4.3.1 and 4.71; Nursey-Bray 2006: 108, 126) reproduced as Tables 6 and 7 in this report. On the basis of her collaborative work with Wuthathi and Girringun people she also developed "A Socially Just Framework for Engagement" (2005: 13), reproduced in this report as Appendix 1.

The research protocols she agreed on with the Hope Vale community took a long time to develop, and provided directions for how information was to be collected, how it would be analysed, where it would be housed, how it would come back to the community, and conditions about its publication (Nursey-Bray 2006: 107). The research agreement (which can be viewed in its entirety in Appendix 3 of Nursey-Bray 2006) included the following provisos:

That the researcher:

- i. Acknowledge the intellectual property of Hope Vale where it was considered their specific and special cultural property;
- ii. Allow all publications to be vetted and endorsed by Hope Vale prior to submission;
- iii. House all information collected during the project at Hope Vale upon the completion of the project; and
- iv. Ensure that community benefits accrued from the work.

(Nursey-Bray 2006: 107-108)

Nursey-Bray (2005, 2006) is very clear that negotiation of an agreement is a long process which cannot be rushed. The inequities of power play a large, if rarely acknowledged role. There are steps which must be completed, and all parties need to agree and take responsibility for their position throughout the life of the agreement. If there is any coercion, or glossing over of potential disagreement, the deal will eventually falter. Likewise Toni Bauman (2007) has addressed the need for skills training in mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution (see also Smith 2001). She says that simply knowing about:

“... issues which impact on Indigenous people does not equate to the necessary skills of engagement and communication, and not all individuals will be suited to effective engagement.” (2007: 14)

3.3 Scholarship, Integrity and Intellectual Property

Innovation, academic honesty, integrity (Macrina 2005), scholarship and IP are generally core features of every piece or research. The IP of a researcher is guarded by protocols concerning plagiarism. There are standards within the academy as to how sources of information are acknowledged. When a researcher works with knowledge, she/he isn't just copying or reproducing it but is rigorously working on sources, acknowledging their influence while demonstrating his/her own intellectual work on them – evidenced by the development of a new and unique research question, through extensive research (for example, literature review, fieldwork, photography), and the synthesis and analysis of all the data. What results from the research is something new – new knowledge that wasn't there before (the result of enquiry and enlightenment as discussed in Section 2), and this is the Intellectual Property of the researcher. It is not the raw knowledge or data that existed before his/her research but the knowledge or data that s/he drew out and drew together.

Strategy 2: Develop mechanisms for the protection of Aboriginal intellectual and cultural property

Actions

- Develop a legal framework and policies that recognise and protect ICPR.
- Develop protocols and guidelines for the use and protection of Aboriginal ICPR in research, NRM activities, the tourism industry, and other uses.
- Develop and implement culturally-appropriate benefit-sharing arrangements for the use of Traditional Owners ICPR in biodiscovery, research, tourism, and other uses.
- Develop and implement an educational campaign on Aboriginal ICPR issues.
- Develop an education strategy and plain English information kit for Aboriginal people on ICPR issues, including current legislation and policy.
- Develop binding protocols and mechanisms for research institutions to ensure that Aboriginal ICPR issues are respected in research approval processes.

(WTAPPT 2005: 16, 61)

Strategy 20: Protect Traditional Owners' knowledge of traditionally used plants including technologies and access to these resources.

(WTAPPT 2005: 19)

Strategy 23: Ensure that the intellectual and cultural property rights of Traditional Owners are recognised by the tourism industry.

(WTAPPT 2005: 97)

Under Intellectual Property law, information comes into the public domain and is available to all. Currently, there are still no effective ways in which the Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights (ICPR) of Indigenous peoples have been adequately protected. ICPR are defined as those rights held by Indigenous people to their:

“... traditional knowledge about biodiversity, natural resources, cultural information and secret or sacred sites/areas; to property including artistic works, designs, images, cultural objects and other cultural expressions. ICPR includes the tangible and intangible aspects of cultural practices. ICPR refers to the resources and knowledge systems developed, nurtured and refined by Indigenous people and passed on by them as part of expressing their cultural identity. It includes the right to decide on matters regarding access to and management of information and resources.” (Janke 1997; WTMA 2005 cited in WTAPPT 2005: 13)

Henrietta Fourmile (1995, 1996, 1998 and Fourmile-Marrie 2000) has been active in calling for recognition of Indigenous Knowledge, either as part of Intellectual Property Rights or in conjunction with Native Title rights in Australia.

In his report submitted to the *Sixth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*, Mick Dodson examines how Indigenous customary law could be used as a complementary and new system (rather than Intellectual Property law) to protect Indigenous Knowledge at the international, national and regional levels (Dodson 2007: 1, 3, 8). He discusses the international treaties and articles as well as the various national agreements and policies to protect Indigenous Knowledge (2007: 3-7). While the new United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* explicitly provides for the protection of IK, there is no 'comprehensive protection' which fully deals with the 'concerns of indigenous peoples' (Dodson 2007: 7, 9), especially in relation to the misuse and misappropriation of knowledge. A number of United Nations agencies are addressing this and Dodson details the recent, ongoing deliberations of the WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation) committee on the interrelationship between IK and IP law (Dodson 2007: 8).

Nevertheless, to see the protection of IK as being solely an issue of IP law is misleading, says Dodson, as the two systems are so profoundly different with one being centred on the knowledge or creativity of the individual, and the other on:

"... communal transgenerational knowledge ... Indigenous traditional knowledge is not simply a different type of intellectual property; it is a completely different entity ... and as long as it remains unrecognized, questions will persist about the appropriateness of existing intellectual property regimes to protect indigenous interests." (Dodson 2007: 8)

He recommends that the *UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues* commission a study into how a system could be developed and implemented (Dodson 2007: 9) to 'ensure that traditional knowledge is not taken inappropriately, without the free, prior and informed consent of the relevant peoples' (Dodson 2007: 11). Because customary law generally operates at the level of the community rather than the individual, using it as a basis for the development of a new international standard or mechanism of protection of IK would shift the focus away from the individual and IP law (Dodson 2007: 12, 13). Such an international instrument would need to be general and flexible enough to properly account for difference as well as points of commonality between Indigenous groups and customary laws around the world (Dodson 2007: 16, 17).

Dodson recommends that appropriate forms are needed to guard against *ad hoc* arrangements so that IK is protected at the national and regional levels as well (2007: 13,15). At the same time the interpretation of laws and dispute resolution should not undermine Indigenous authority (2007: 16). Irrespective of how these issues might be resolved in future,

"...the protection of Indigenous knowledge as it relates to their ecological knowledge, cultural property, art and cultural aspects, secret and sacred information and all other aspects of their culture is the most significant issue raised by Indigenous people when contemplating research." (Talbot 2005: 34)

3.4 Research Bodies

A number of research organisations and bodies in Australia have a primary role to regulate, fund and manage research and researchers (NHMRC, CSIRO and AIATSIS). The peak body, AIATSIS, has been functioning as an umbrella institute for research in Indigenous communities in Australia and as a clearing house and repository of research data since the

late 1960s. It is firmly established, well funded and staffed, and has a mandate which increasingly reflects as well as informs contemporary Indigenous positions on research. Its governing body, the AIATSIS Council is comprised of nine academics, researchers, educators and community development experts, six of whom are Aboriginal and one a Torres Strait Islander. They are Professor Mick Dodson (Chair), Emeritus Professor Robert Tonkinson (Deputy Chair), Mr Eric Bedford, Ms Jackie Huggins, Ms Raymattja Marika, Ms Natascha McNamara, Professor John Maynard, Mr Dana Ober and Mr Michael Williams (AIATSIS Council Biographies 2007).

The building of strong links with AIATSIS could be effective in helping manage as well as request new research in the Wet Tropics. Their guidelines for Ethical Research are commonly applied in research with Indigenous Australians (AIATSIS 2000 *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies*), and are endorsed by WTAPPT (2005: 81). They are a major funding body for research with an extensive collection of print, audio and visual materials from around Australia. Part of their charter is to make these available to the respective Indigenous people (AIATSIS 2007 *Audiovisual Archive: Collections Management Policy Manual*), and they have the capabilities to assist communities in locating this material. They could function as a clearing house for Wet Tropics research on resource use. What is more they are conducting and funding research in a number of significant and related areas. For example, they housed the *Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project* (2003-2006) in their Native Title Research Unit (NTRU), and the recent report by Bauman (2006, 2007) contains some crucial findings and recommendations about community engagement in research.

3.5 Disseminating Results and Repatriation of Material

Strategy 7: Repatriate and appropriately manage Aboriginal material culture.

Actions

- 7.1 Support Traditional Owners to negotiate with landholders the return of material culture.
- 7.2 Develop a comprehensive database of Wet Tropics artefacts (and their uses) held in museums and other institutions as an educational tool for future generations.
- 7.3 Develop MoUs for cultural materials housed in institutions and museums (until repatriation occurs)
- 7.4 Establish Aboriginal cultural heritage management committees with Traditional Owner representation for museums to address issues relating to the identification, return, preservation, use and ownership of Aboriginal cultural material.
- 7.5 Promote the representation of Aboriginal people on Museum Boards.
- 7.6 Support and resource current Aboriginal Keeping Places and museums in the region.
- 7.7 Support Traditional Owners to undertake training to be able to manage Aboriginal material culture.

(WTAPPT 2005: 17, 71)

An essential aspect of every research project should be the dissemination of research results to the community or people concerned. While the broad means for how this occurs can be worked out by all parties at the beginning of a research project, the specifics may change over the course of the project's life (AAS 2003). Again, it can take many forms, and the agreement brokered between Hope Vale people and Melissa Nursey-Bray is a good example of how the issue of disseminating results was decided (see Nursey-Bray 2006: 107-8). Different but equally useful examples are Leah Talbot's thesis (2005) and the 'Yalanji Fire Book' produced collectively by Ro Hill and Yalanji People (2004). In that book all parties came together as a committee to make decisions about the project. They decided who would do what, what the book would contain, how the book would look, and what IP rights were held by each party.

The 2005 publication by the UNESCO LINKS project (Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems) of Edvard Hviding's, *Kiladi oro vivineidi ria tingitonga pa idere oro pa goanna pa Marovo. Reef and Rainforest: An Environmental Encyclopaedia of Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands*, is another example of how cultural knowledge and new knowledge can be disseminated to the research participants and wider community. In this case while Hviding wrote the book its copyright is held jointly by the people of Marovo and Edvard Hviding³.

Obviously though, most research carried out to date in the Wet Tropics has not been conducted under the sorts of agreements or protocols discussed above. Consequently there are vast amounts of print, visual, and audio materials and cultural materials concerning the Wet Tropics, in a huge range of places in Australia and elsewhere. In the *Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan*, Strategy 7 is designed to 'Repatriate and appropriately manage Aboriginal material culture' (WTAPPT 2005: 17, 69-71). Locating these materials requires well-developed research skills and training, and could be facilitated by establishing strong, ongoing links with a number of museums, archives, libraries and other research facilities. Research training could be given to a number of key Aboriginal people to create a dialogue and partnership with staff in such facilities. Trainees could become experienced in knowing how to find material themselves or knowing where to ask for help. Those Indigenous people of the Wet Tropics who are already researchers, or who undertake the appropriate study could access these data and undertake their own research projects with research funds obtained from bodies such as AIATSIS.

Locating materials is one thing, but actually knowing how to keep them safe as well as make them available or not available is another issue. In the interim, knowing what material is where is a good starting point, before other decisions are made about whether all materials need to/ or should come back home, to whose home, and what infrastructure and security is needed to properly care for and manage cultural heritage materials on country. Some of these issues have begun to be addressed by Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics, as evidenced in the strategies and actions developed in *Caring for Country and Culture: The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan* (WTAPPT 2005).

³ See Smallacombe *et al.* 2007: 41-50) for a good discussion on IP, patents, copyright, trademarks, breach of confidence and Trade Practices.

4. Models of Research Conduct

4.1 Non-Collaborative Research and Collaborative Research

While much of the research that has been conducted in the Wet Tropics could be classified as non-collaborative this is not necessarily problematic. Non-collaborative research does not, in itself equate to disrespectful research or inappropriate research. Indeed, much more research will be conducted which will not be collaborative. There will be projects which have to be completed in a very short time frame, and there will be some projects for which there may not be the scholarly / technical expertise within the relevant Aboriginal community of the Wet Tropics at that particular time.

If we look at the potential for collaboration in each project then whether all projects are fully collaborative or not ceases to be the central concern. That would allow each project to be considered on its merits and in its entirety (see Section 3). Certainly wherever possible, collaboration should be encouraged and facilitated, however some research projects lend themselves more toward fully collaborative work than others. This is not simply because of the subject matter, the discipline, the time frame, or the budget. It also has to do with the personalities and skills base of the researcher and the research participants. For example, the ability to skilfully negotiate may be absent, a point forcefully made by Toni Bauman in her recent paper (2007; see Section 4.2.1 below). In some cases, the research outcome may be preferable for all parties if there isn't full collaboration.

In a general sense though and in looking at Section 3.1 of this report, we can see that some research such as Native Title, *Queensland Aboriginal Land Act* research or Rapid Assessment is unlikely to become fully collaborative in the style of the recent work of Hill (2004), Talbot (2005), Nursey-Bray (2005, 2006) or Nursey-Bray and Rist (2002). Government initiated research in relation to resource management on the other hand has great collaborative potential, as does community requested and community driven research. The potential for collaboration is also high in researcher requested research. The strategies and actions detailed in Chapter 4 of the report *Caring for Country and Culture: The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan* very clearly indicate what research is most needed, and how to establish collaborative projects.

4.2 Community and Collaborative Research

The term and concept 'community' has been long-critiqued in the social sciences. Community members and researchers need to ensure that we don't simply assume any community is without inherent conflict (see: Smith and Finlayson 1997; Hviding and Bayliss 2000). It is crucial to be aware of tensions and interest groups in all communities, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including the 'research community' – a very diverse and sometimes divided group. There is never just one view in a community and the dominant view may not necessarily reflect the diversity of opinions of its members (see Section 2). In highlighting some 'pitfalls' of participatory research, Evans and others (2006: 5-6) draw attention to the reliance on community workshops and meetings. These forms of work are public and it is usually people who are confident about speaking, the powerful people, whose voices are 'amplified' in these situations. Other less-powerful people, who are not likely to be involved in a workshop, are further silenced. Their views are very unlikely to surface in this way. However, it should be noted that if workshops are really run as workshops, as occasions in which everyone contributes in a 'hands-on' way, then this shortcoming can be successfully resolved.

In any community, disputes generally revolve around valued resources: people, knowledge, land and sea (see also Nursey-Bray 2006). Likewise, doubts have been raised in recent

scholarship that 'community' is sometimes created in order to meet the requirements of funding bodies (Tsing 2005). This is not to deny that 'communities' exist but rather to highlight some of the issues with presuming 'community' necessarily means unity.

4.2.1 Community Research

Not all collaborative work is published, well-documented or known outside its local context. Nor has it taken place during the prime era of collaboration with the development and fine tuning of collaborative research methods that we see taking place in Australia in the last ten years⁴.

Strategy 13: Increase the level of involvement of Traditional Owners in all levels of research, policy, planning and management arrangements for plants and animals.

Actions

- Implement the 'Rainforest Aboriginal Involvement in Research' component of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement to ensure that research commissioned by DNR&M, WTMA, EPA, and DEH in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area conforms with the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical research in Indigenous Studies.
- Promote the use and adoption of the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies by all researchers and organisations that undertake research in the region.

(WTAPPT 2005: 81)

Strategy 18: Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in research, planning and management of waterways.

Some good examples of Community-Based Management research undertaken at the turn of the 21st century to protect biodiversity and to promote "sustainable livelihoods" can be seen in Borrini-Feyerabend and Tarnowski (2005: 71), Johannes and Hickey (2004), Smith (2001) and Nursey-Bray (2006). Rosemary Hill's work spans this period when new models were being developed by herself and others, and the most recent developments (see Hill and Yalanji People 2004; Hill 2001; Hill *et al.* 2000; Hill 1998; Hill and Smyth 1999).

There are multiple ways in which communities and researchers can be mutually involved in research projects which may not be fully collaborative. Traditional Owner groups such as Bar-Barrum, Djiru, Gunggandji and Banjin in the Wet Tropics have signalled their desire to be active parties in research and in the management of natural resources on country (WTAPPT 2005: 77), as have Djabugay speaking people (Talbot 2005: 101). Negotiation of research could include any number of the following strategies: contracts; probationary periods; partnerships and compacts; cooperative agreements; reference groups; memoranda of understanding; hubs; or roundtables⁵. But what is absolutely crucial for this to occur equitably and successfully is for negotiation and mediation to be undertaken by skilled and well-trained people (Smith 2001). As Toni Bauman notes in her most recent discussion, informed and transparent decisions can only be sustainable, when they are truly 'owned' by all parties (2007; see also Nursey-Bray 2005, 2006). In the research Bauman undertook in IFaMP (Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project) she identified the need for a "national

⁴ For example in 1987 Maureen Fuery and Shelley Greer suggested to Cowal Creek Community Council in Cape York that their research skills could be used to record people's connection to country and to each other. Community members saw value in the project and the 'Cowal Creek Country Survey' was born. Several years later when the Injinoo Lands Trust was formed, community representatives took a more direct role. The key documents (genealogies and data on people's identities and country) which emerged during the process of workshops, informal yarns and semi-formal and formal interviews, on and off country, are now held by the Apudthama Lands Trust. This early work preceded the development of good consultative models which we now take for granted (Greer and Fuery 2008; Fuery 1993; Fuery and Greer 1987a, 1987b, 1993a, 1993b).

⁵ *Roundtables* are meetings with a facilitator. Multiple stakeholders (about 10-20 persons) who share a common interest or expertise in an issue come together to make decisions as a group, with everyone on an equal footing.

network of highly trained, skilled, monitored and mentored – particularly Indigenous – process practitioners” (Bauman 2007).

4.2.2 Participatory Research Models

Participatory styles of research come in a range of forms (see Borrini-Feyerabend and Tarnowski 2005; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Evans *et al.* 2006) which continue to be used as well as critiqued. At base, participatory research which is done in good faith is a bottom-up or grassroots approach involving local people in every stage of the process and decision-making (Jennings 2000 in Evans *et al.* 2006: 4). At best it is:

*“...a collaborative learning experience where local people and researchers are full partners in **creating knowledge** [my emphasis]...This means that community members are involved in the formulation of the research question, methodology, data collection, and analysis phases. Participatory research requires constant self-reflection on the relationship of the researcher to the community and on the impact of that relationship on the research.”* (Thompson *et al.* 2005 cited in Evans *et al.* 2006: 5)

Participatory research can be used very effectively in the management of natural resources. This is sometimes known as ‘participatory management’ and its key features are to take on board the ‘capacities and entitlements ... multiple rights and interests’ of all groups. Bringing people together, as a process, to decide on an issue and produce agreements and plans together, allows decisions about natural resources management to be made by many different people. That participatory projects are so varied and “tailored to context is one of their least known and underappreciated features” (Borrini-Feyerabend and Tarnowski 2005: 71-3).

In their *Guide to Participatory Tools for Forest Communities*, Evans and others (2006:7) identify two key forms of participatory research as ‘extractive’ and ‘collaborative management’ arguing that the use of either approach depends on the nature of the project. Their ‘how to do’ participatory research is a valuable resource, containing step-by-step details of each stage in the process, and which tools to use. These tools include:

- **Four ‘R’s framework** (rights, responsibilities, relationships and revenues/returns – used to assess ‘stakeholders’ roles and influence’);
- **Pebble Scoring** (used to shed light on what understandings and priorities participants have);
- **Visioning and Pathways** (where a group looks at what they wish to achieve, and then develop strategies to get there);
- **Scenarios** (where people envisage factors which may affect them in future and what the outcomes may be);
- **Participatory Mapping** (where a group develops geospatial knowledge of landscapes);
- **Spidergrams** (diagrams which visually represent answers to clear-cut, structured questions);
- **Venn Diagrams** (used to represent relationships between participants);
- **Who Counts Matrix** (used to show who is most affected by forest management);
- **Bayesian Belief Networks** (a mostly quantitative tool, allowing people to develop probability models); and
- **Discourse-based Valuation** (where the people involved can discuss, publicly, how certain policy decisions will affect them).

4.2.2 Participatory or Cultural Mapping

Strategy 1: Action 1.3: Undertake a Country-based mapping project which clarifies boundaries for each traditional group (with appropriate cultural protocols (WTAPPT 2005: 55).

Strategy 29: Develop a cultural landscape mapping program to document the range of Aboriginal values at a local and regional level (WTAPPT 2005: 20).

There are a number of benefits and a few negative aspects to cultural or participatory mapping. These are discussed in Evans *et al.* (2006:24-25). Rocheleau (2005) prefers to use the term 'multimapping' to refer to the type of community-based mapping being undertaken in cultural heritage approaches (see Section 4.3.2). In her paper *Maps as Power Tools: Locating Communities in Space or Situating People and Ecologies in Place?* Rocheleau argues that:

"The process of multimapping – in multiple media and from a diversity of perspectives – can help people to rediscover, appreciate, define, document and defend the historical and current meanings of their lands and to map their dreams for the future. Multimedia data sets can facilitate negotiation and planning within and across groups with common and conflicting dreams. Multimapping, whether with GIS or more conventional and traditional methods, can serve to both express and expand the social, ecological and cartographic imagination of all participants. In the end, it is crucial for people to make maps, numbers, picture, and stories for themselves not simply as finely honed paper weapons against a superior power of impoverished imagination." (Rocheleau 2005: 358)

Peter Poole's report (2005) on the success of the Ye'kuana Mapping Project in Venezuela echoes the words of Rocheleau. The Ye'kuana expanded their knowledge base and technical skills and moved beyond simply mapping boundaries, to recording fine-grained mapping of names, resources and places. In the process they became interested in sustainable development, and the mapping exercise has increased the strength of their claims to land.

Strategy 29: Develop a cultural landscape mapping program to document the range of Aboriginal values at a local and regional scale.

Actions

- 29.1 Develop a regional, cultural landscape mapping framework and project outline for each Traditional Owner group.
- 29.2 Identify infrastructure, skills, and training required to develop, implement and manage cultural landscape mapping databases and information.
- 29.3 Develop and implement information sessions and training packages on the development and management of cultural landscape databases.
- 29.4 Develop intellectual and cultural property protocols for collection, use, access and storage of information at local, sub-regional and regional levels.
- 29.5 Develop agreements and MoUs with relevant government agencies and NRM stakeholders regarding the use of the cultural landscape database.

(WTAPPT 2005: 120)

In the Wet Tropics there are major developments underway in cultural mapping. The central objective of the *Cultural Landscape Mapping System* is for a Traditional Owner controlled and maintained GIS system based on a participatory model. It is envisaged this will be

beneficial in a number of ways, including cultural maintenance and the protection and preservation of sites of significance in each Traditional Owner group's Country. The local and regional mapping of the cultural landscape, with its inherent values and meanings, will also be significant in the process of relisting the WTWHA for its Aboriginal cultural values (WTAPPT 2005: 110, 120).

In their report on the *Cultural Heritage Mapping Project* the Aboriginal Rainforest Council examined a number of mapping and cultural heritage projects and database systems – Balkanu Traditional Knowledge Recording Project; Cultural Site Management Systems – Uluru and Vanuatu; Giringun Aboriginal Corporation GIS and Cultural Heritage Database; and the Wet Tropics Management Authority GIS. This was to see what has worked, what each system may offer as a model for collecting and storing vital cultural information, and how to control access to those databases. The different sorts of information being collected, the techniques for collection, and associated training issues are discussed in detail in the ARC report (see Table 4: Significance of Concepts and Technologies, ARC 2007: 17-19).

4.2.3 Indigenous and Indigenist Research

As discussed in Section 2, Scientific forms of knowledge are regarded as dominant in the West and since the 1970s there have been many forms of resistance, e.g. critical theory (Fabian 2001; Agrawal 2002) feminist knowledge and research (e.g. Jaggar and Bordo 1989), and Indigenist knowledge and research (e.g. Rigney 1997, 2001; Martin 2003, 2006; Smith 1999; Talbot 2005). In her 1999 book on decolonizing knowledge, Linda Tuhiwai Smith explores the interaction between power, research and knowledge:

“...and the...ways...imperialism is embedded in disciplines of knowledge and methodologies as ‘regimes of truth’....she also discusses...concepts such as ‘discovery’, ‘claiming’ and ‘naming’ through which the west has incorporated and continues to incorporate the indigenous world within its own web... It brilliantly demonstrates that ‘when indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed.’”
(Amazon book description accessed at <http://www.amazon.com/Decolonizing-Methodologies-Research...> on 14/8/2007)

In discussing her own Indigenist approach and putting it into a local context, Karen Martin (2003: 203) refers to *terra nullius* research: that is, research conducted about Indigenous Australians without their permission, or without their involvement. Part of the technique and the effect of *terra nullius* research is the “separation and severance from our stories and our knowledges” (Martin 2006: 2). Martin's PhD thesis counteracts this by embedding the performance of research and writing within her own performative and experiential life as an Indigenous woman from southern Queensland. Her PhD is framed around ‘stories about stories’ (2006:141).

Her Indigenist approach does not reject Western approaches to knowledge, but she positions herself as central to the research process, and positions the Western approach as something ‘other’ which she examines ‘alongside’ (Martin 2003: 205; Martin 2006; see also Yellowhorn 2002 cited in Watkins 2005: 435).

This beautifully mimics her other focus on ‘relatedness’, specifically spring-boarding from the ways Kuku Yalanji at Buru classify and manage outsiders as: strangers, acquaintances, and friends. She argues that it is key to good and equitable research that researchers likewise ‘come alongside’ Buru, Kuku Yalanji; that they make the transition from being fully ‘Other’ as strangers to becoming ‘Another’ as friends through proper action (Martin 2006: 197). Her approach is not one of resistance but of transformation and decolonisation (Martin 2006:

206). Indigenous 'Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing' are centred 'in alignment with western qualitative research frameworks' (2003: 211), and in so doing, new knowledges and new subjectivities emerge. The key principles of her approach to Indigenist research are:

- Recognition of our worldviews, our knowledges and our realities as distinctive and vital to our existence and survival;
- Honouring our social mores as essential processes through which we live, learn and situate ourselves as Aboriginal people in our own lands and when in the lands of other Aboriginal people;
- Emphasis of social, historical and political contexts which shape our experiences, lives, positions and futures; and
- Privileging the voices, experiences and lives of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal lands.

(Martin 2003: 205)

While much of Karen Martin's approach could be applied by a non-Indigenist researcher (indeed much of it constitutes standard qualitative practice) there are obvious components which cannot be translated to other researchers, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, who do not take an Indigenist research position.

Similarly Leah Talbot (2005) in concert with Djabugay speaking peoples, adopted an Indigenist and collaborative research position. Despite the attractions and strengths of Participatory, Critical Action and Action Learning Research paradigms, she found that none was able to "confront the critical challenges facing an Indigenous Researcher" (2005: 32). In her chapter on 'Methodology' Talbot describes these challenges and benefits. Her research proceeded with the development of trust, building on family connections and networks, and through taking advice and direction from the Djabugay people (2005: 42-53). What marks this as different from other qualitative research is that Indigenist research is predicated on an 'Aboriginal commonality', a shared way of being-in-the-world (see especially Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1). Because of her Aboriginality, Leah Talbot (like Karen Martin above), is always accountable to Elders and family. It is via this commonality and her relatedness to some members of the Djabugay speaking people, that she is able to extend her accountability to the community with whom she is undertaking research (Talbot 2005: 44). Understanding the authority, referral, approval, validation, and knowledge-transmission roles of Elders in her own community, she says, translated easily into this research context.

4.2.4 Transcultural / Transdisciplinary Research

Michael Christie's model of 'transdisciplinary research' in the area of Indigenous research (research involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges) is developed in a recent paper *Transdisciplinary Research and Aboriginal Knowledge* (2006). He argues that:

"There are Indigenous knowledge practices which will never engage with the academy, just as there are some which will never acknowledge Indigenous knowledge practices. There is however, a Transdisciplinary space within the academy where claims of alternative knowledge traditions and their collaborations can be addressed...which involve partnerships, work 'both ways', and are consistent with appropriate modes of engagement and negotiation."
(2006: 79)

Before delineating the characteristics of 'transdisciplinary research' Christie defines Indigenous Research (B) as the space where Indigenous Knowledge Practices (A) and Academic Knowledge Practices (C) intersect. It is characterised by respectful and productive

engagements between academic researchers and Indigenous knowledge; the space where aspects of each system is 'recognisable or legible' (2006: 80).

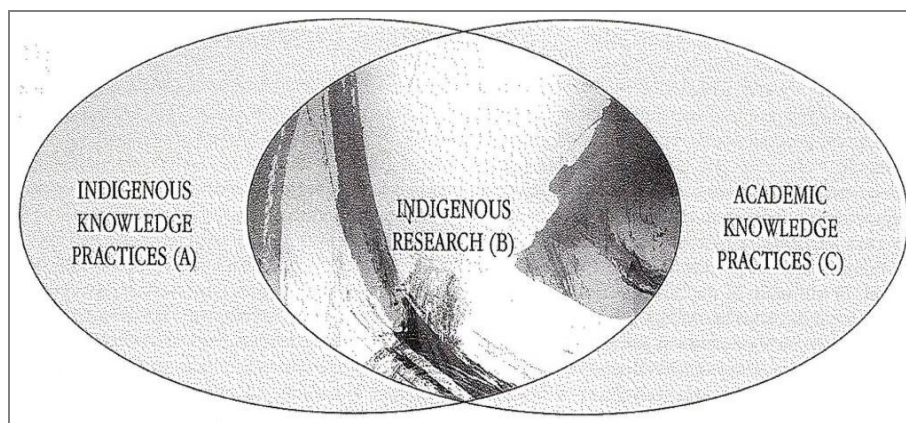


FIGURE 1: MICHAEL CHRISTIE'S INDIGENOUS RESEARCH AS THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN TWO KNOWLEDGE TRADITIONS (Christie 2006: 80).

The following statement in the *Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan* clarifies their stance on the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge:

"There is increasing international recognition of the need to combine scientific knowledge with traditional knowledge to develop a better understanding of ecosystems, and the importance of revitalizing and preserving Indigenous knowledge." (Schneirer 2002 cited in WTAPPT 2005: 57)

A similar approach to Christie's 'Indigenous Research' model was discussed at the 'Scoping principles for co-research in MTSRF: Notes of a Meeting between the ARC, CSIRO and JCU (18/5/2007).

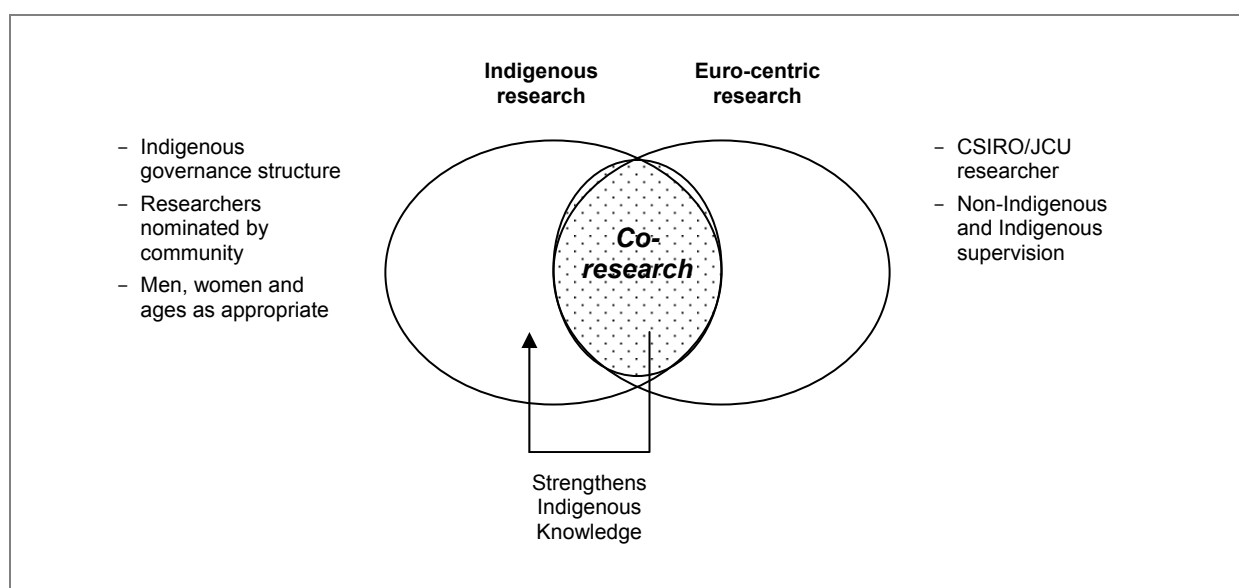


FIGURE 2: DRAFT MODEL OF CO-RESEARCH PRINCIPLES (ARC, CSIRO and JCU 2007).

At that meeting a model of 'co-research' was developed with the following principles of:

- Equity for Indigenous partners;
- Resources must be provided for Indigenous partners and co-researchers;
- Any research must strengthen Indigenous knowledge, and not 'mine' this for other researchers' gain;
- Work must focus on Indigenous definition of research (i.e. 'looking into') rather than science (i.e. 'knowledge takers/ clever people'); and
- Any information gathered must be managed through ARC's Intellectual property mechanisms to protect Indigenous knowledge (ARC, CSIRO and JCU 2007).

Christie refines his model further (from Figure 1) so that what he calls 'Transdisciplinary' research is clarified.

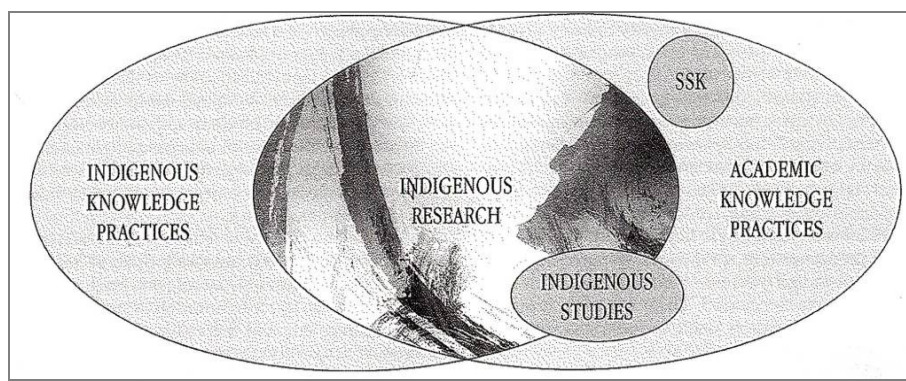


FIGURE 3: MICHAEL CHRISITE'S *INDIGENOUS TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH, INDIGENOUS STUDIES AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE* (Christie 2006: 83)

It 'sometimes involves Indigenous knowledge traditions and sometimes...not and doesn't always have all parties 'seeing-eye-to-eye'. The projects are often 'messy' but exciting, even when there is only partial agreement (2006: 81-2). Christie refers to four collaborative, transdisciplinary projects with the Yolngu of Northeast Arnhem Land, highlighting the tensions that go with taking research outside the university. It is an approach to research which he argues is 'worth fighting for, because [it]...is interesting, productive and significant.' (Christie 2006: 88; See also: Christie *et al.* 2007; Verran *et al.* 2006; Verran and Christie 2007).

5. Research on Resource Use

5.1 Previous and Current Research outside the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

One of the early works about human-nature relationships and resources (cultural and natural), particularly of Indigenous people encapsulated within a nation-state was *Resource Managers: North American and Australian Hunter-Gatherers* edited by Nancy Williams and Eugene Hunn (1982). Recently there have been a large number of research projects and publications about natural resources, especially in relation to Indigenous Knowledge (Agrawal 2002). The following cases are included as samples of research on resource use.

Edvard Hviding and Tim Bayliss-Smith in Marovo Lagoon

Norwegian anthropologist Edvard Hviding has been working with people in the Marovo Lagoon of the Solomon Islands since 1986. Two of his works are considered here: his jointly authored book on rainforests (Hviding and Bayliss-Smith 2000), and his sole authored environmental encyclopaedia (Hviding 2005). Hviding and Bayliss-Smith undertook joint social anthropological-ecological work with support from the Solomon Islanders (Hviding and Bayliss-Smith 2000: xiii). *Islands of Rainforest* examines the pressures on rainforest use by working with the interests and conflicts between people of the area and those coming in – be they conservationists or loggers (see also Hviding 2007). Hviding's work was facilitated by his knowledge of the language and focussed on the:

“...social, political and ideological dimensions of resource use...as well as on ethnobiology and ethnobotany, languages and history...His main approach has been one of prolonged residence and participant-observation ...with an emphasis on...considerable engagement in agricultural and hunting and gathering activities in all types of forest. This has enabled him to interpret the decision-making processes involved in the day-to-day management of resources, how these management practices have changed...and how they interact with an increasing presence of foreign agents also interested in appropriating resources for their own ends.” (Hviding and Bayliss-Smith 2000: ix)

The human geographer Tim Bayliss used surveys to look at land use, diet, use of time, cultivated land and secondary forest, as well as ecotourism, logging and reforestation (Hviding and Bayliss-Smith 2000: ix-x). Drawing on their respective skills and knowledge they produced a study of the agroforestry system which includes anthropological, ethnobotanical, ecological and historical perspectives.

Hviding (2005) has since written *Kiladi oro vivineidi ria tingitonga pa idere oro pa goanna pa Marovo. Reef and Rainforest: An Environmental Encyclopaedia of Marovo Lagoon, Solomon Islands*. While Hviding is the acknowledged author of the text, its copyright is held jointly by Hviding and the people of Marovo. Written in Marovo and English it demonstrates how people name and classify the world, how access to natural resources is managed, and the crucial role played by Marovo people as:

“keepers of their resources...It opens opportunities for a dialogue between Marovo knowledge holders and scientists and resource managers, based, as a starting point, upon acknowledging and showing mutual respect for each other's words and knowledges of nature.” (Nakashima in Hviding 2005: vii)

Hope Vale Aboriginal Council and Melissa Nursey-Bray

Melissa Nursey-Bray and Hope Vale Aboriginal Council forged collaborative research practices in developing a green turtle and dugong hunting management strategy (Hope Vale Council and Nursey-Bray 1999; Nursey-Bray 2006). In her PhD thesis she demonstrates in great detail and in a theoretically sophisticated way how they negotiated the project. The documentation and analysis of the successes and pitfalls of brokering an agreement with statutory authorities over resource management is very applicable, as is the development of protocols and research agreements, with an emphasis on social justice and equity. Nursey-Bray doesn't give away any of her rights or responsibilities as a researcher and nor does she give away any of the rights and responsibilities of the Hope Vale community. This project appears to be very collaborative: it is clearly stipulated who owns the material, and where joint ownership occurs (see also Section 3.2 and Tables 6 and 7 in this report).

Nigel Haggan, Barbara Neis and Ian Baird

Haggan, Neis and Baird's *Fishers' Knowledge in Fisheries Science and Management* (2007) contains papers on the significance of local knowledge about the marine realm, and combines the knowledge of fishers with scientific approaches to bridge the gaps in knowledge and in biodiversity conservation. Their work was undertaken as part of the LINKS (Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems) project of UNESCO which was established in 2002 to explore "the synergies and linkages that exist between cultural and biological diversities" (Johannes and Hickey 2004: 3).

Tropical Savannas CRC and Indigenous Research Projects

The Tropical Savannas CRC (2007a, 2007b) is involved in three Indigenous Research Projects, which include:

- i. "Integrating Research and Indigenous Land Management". This massive project contains many programs: for example the *Western Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Project* (WAFMA 2007a) was awarded the prestigious Eureka Prize (in Science) in 2007. The partners are: Darwin Liquefied Natural Gas, the Northern Territory Government, Traditional Aboriginal Owners and Indigenous Representative Bodies. Together they are working to offset some of the Greenhouse emissions from the Gas industry:

"...by adopting effective fire management practices in what is today largely unmanaged land. Such practices will also help conserve environmental and cultural values in the project region equivalent to the adjacent World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park.

To achieve this, the WAFMA project partners will implement strategic fire management from early in the dry season to reduce the size and extent of unmanaged wildfires...many of the main benefits of the project are seen to be in better protecting the natural and cultural values of the plateau and in the social and economic stimulus it provides for Indigenous communities...it is a fee for service arrangement in which Indigenous fire managers are being paid for fire management to produce greenhouse gas offsets" (Tropical Savannas CRC 2007a);

- ii. "Improving cross-cultural engagement' between natural and cultural resource management (NCRM) agencies and Indigenous communities, land owners and managers by learning from experience and engaging stakeholders in an exploration of best practice" (Tropical Savannas CRC 2007b); and
- iii. "Indigenous Ecological Knowledge" to focus on the 'complex and diverse knowledge about the ecology and landscapes of the tropical savannas' of Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland, in partnership with North Australian Indigenous Land

and Sea Managers Alliance (NAILSMA) (Tropical Savannas CRC 2007b). NAILSMA is a Memorandum of Understanding between the peak Indigenous natural resource agencies in northern Australia, i.e. Cape York, the Kimberley, the Top End, and the Gulf of Carpentaria.” (Tropical Savannas CRC 2007c)

5.2 Previous and Current Research in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

The following are included as a sample of some research conducted with Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics Area (refer to Tables 1 and 2 for a broader range). See also the Draft Report by Hill *et al.* (2007) on *Aboriginal Resource Use, Values and Knowledge*.

Karen Martin

Karen Martin has recently completed a PhD thesis *Please Knock Before You Enter: An Investigation of how Rainforest Aboriginal People regulate outsiders and the implications for Western research and researchers*. It builds upon and extends Chris Anderson’s argument (1998a) that Kuku-Yalanji, as their own ‘bosses’ have always controlled their relationships with Outsiders: strangers; people who are known about; and people who are known (see Section 4.2.4 for more details). Martin argues that the key to respectful, honest and responsible research being conducted with Aboriginal people is a researcher’s willingness to critique their own positioning, who they are personally, culturally and professionally, as well as an honest desire to work together, as in to ‘knock first’ before ‘coming alongside’ (Martin 2006).

She adopts and develops an Indigenist research stance developing a specific methodology comprised of four phases: three conditions of relatedness; eight research procedures in the Inquiry stage; immersion; and critique, re-framing and ‘harmonisation’ which allows research Stories to be presented (2006: vii). These stages, with the exception of stage one in its entirety, are standard for qualitative research in general, despite the different language she uses to delineate them.

Karen Martin also developed a set of protocols (see Figure 4 and Table 3 in this report) governing her research, based on seven Rules, which she then checked with her own people of Quandamookah in Southeast Queensland, and then with some Burungu, Kuku Yalanji (2006:189-193). The rules are:

- Respect your land;
- Respect your laws;
- Respect your Elders;
- Respect your culture;
- Respect your Community;
- Respect your families; and
- Respect your futures (Martin 2006: 182).

Leah Talbot with Djabugay speaking people

Leah Talbot has undertaken Indigenist research with Djabugay speaking peoples on the ways in which land management processes constitute a crucial part of their worldview and culture. The cornerstone of difference between Djabugay and Western land management processes, is Djabugay ‘customary obligations’ to country, to their past, their future, and to their kin.

“The presence of Djabugay speaking people on their country is mandated by their essential roles in maintenance, protection, education and knowledge linked to their culture and worldview. Culturally appropriate processes and techniques of managing country are applied as an expression of belief, lore, or custom values.” (Talbot 2005: 112)

In this research, Djabugay speaking people are shown to manage their sites and resources through:

- Maintaining ‘presence’ on-country through visiting and monitoring sites, and through land-related work (ranger, tour guiding);
- Protecting sites and resources; and by
- Education and transmitting knowledge and in so doing, protecting their IP in respect of these areas (Talbot 2005: 157-161).

Talbot recommends that researchers undertake collaborative work and maintains that the creation of partnerships with Djabugay speaking people would have wide-ranging benefits to all parties. While she is deliberately non-specific about the cultural protocols she observed in this research, she does reveal something in the nature of a ‘research agreement’ in the following discussion about the research aims, goals, objectives and strategies (see also Tables 4 and 5 in Section 5.2.1). Together Leah Talbot and Djabugay speaking people articulated and agreed upon the following research aims to:

*“Collect and document the Indigenous land management techniques used by the Djabugay people in sustaining, utilising and managing their natural resources and environment within their traditional lands;
Document the Djabugay peoples’ land management techniques used today, detailing how the adaptive and influential uses from their traditional or classical stories, beliefs and customs accord with land management regimes; and
Provide Djabugay people with information and published material to assist with the protection, identification and recording of significant cultural heritage values and management issues within their traditional lands.” (Talbot 2005: 6)*

Similarly the research goals, objectives and strategies were decided collaboratively and are reproduced in Section 5.2.1. The agreed-upon guiding principles for the research were:

*“The research is to be undertaken consistent with the Djabugay cultural protocols;
The research is to be undertaken based on a relationship of trust and respect;
Information and research gathered and documented is compiled in such a way that will be of most use to and understood by the Aboriginal community itself; and
The compiled oral histories and environmental management techniques of cultural heritage sites and areas within the Djabugay traditional lands remain the knowledge and ownership of the Djabugay people.” (Talbot 2005: 9)*

Chris Anderson

While the bulk of anthropologist Chris Anderson's research publications is comprised of academic papers and a thesis (1984), his publications always position the Kuku Yalanji of Wujal Wujal as key actors (often in resistance mode), particularly in the ways they have dealt with incursions into their territory and lives – be it from tin-miners, the State, missionaries, conservationists or developers (1979, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1989, 1988a, 1988b, *In press*). He brought in frontier history at a time when the general public was ignorant of it and he has not been afraid to criticise the role of the State, particularly in the contemporary situation at Wujal Wujal. He was an early advocate for new relationships and dialogues to be forged between museums and Aboriginal people (Anderson 1990, 1994) and he has published important social justice position papers such as with Coates (1989), and again in 1992 addressing the issue of Deaths in Custody at Wujal-Wujal.

Rosemary Hill and Kuku-Yalanji

Collaborative research in the Wet Tropics of North Queensland is exemplified by the work of Rosemary Hill and Kuku-Yalanji (2004). The 'Fire Book' as it is referred to colloquially, represents an excellent example of collaboration which responds to community desires and applied academic interests. It developed from an earlier project⁶. In 1998 the Steering Committee which undertook the "Review of Aboriginal Involvement in the Management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area" noted that the Kuku-Yalanji Fire Protocol "should be seen as a benchmark for the type of collaborative research possible" (1998: 8). The Kuku Yalanji clearly played a central role in the 'Fire Book' project from beginning to end, and the ways in which this was achieved are instructive for all researchers.

Strategy 11: Document traditional knowledge of plants and animals (in a culturally appropriate way) (WTAPPT 2005: 17).

Strategy 13: Increase the level of involvement of Traditional Owners in all levels of research, policy, planning and management arrangements for plants and animals.

Strategy 15: Increase the awareness of NRM stakeholders and the broader community about Aboriginal resource use.

Strategy 18: Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in research, planning and management of waterways (WTAPPT 2005: 18).

Strategy 20: Protect Traditional Owners' knowledge of traditionally used plants including technologies and access to these resources (WTAPPT 2005: 19)

Girringun and Melissa Nursey-Bray

Recently Melissa Nursey-Bray (2005, Nursey-Bray and Rist 2002) has worked collaboratively and equitably with Girringun people of the Wet Tropics and Wuthathi of eastern Cape York (Shelburne Bay). Nursey-Bray's 2005 report *"Having a Yarn": Engaging Indigenous Communities in Natural Resource Management*, documents her collaborative work with Girringun and the Wuthathi in managing land and sea countries. Both projects involved close collaboration but differed in that the Wuthathi project was community-based and involved land and sea management objectives, whereas the project with Girringun, was a co-management project about sea country involving the nine Girringun groups⁷ and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA). She demonstrates that the important stages and processes in developing a plan must be responsive to the needs, aspirations and preferred outcomes of each involved party. Crucial to any 'framework for engagement' or

⁶ Rosemary Hill has engaged in other ground-breaking collaborative work with Kuku Yalanji (see: Hill 1998; 2001; Hill and Smyth 1999; Hill, Griggs and Bama Ngadimunku Inc 2000).

⁷ These are: "Bandjin, Djiru, Girramay, Gugu Badhan, Gulnay, Jirrbal, Nywaigi, Warrgamay and Warungnu." Jack Muriata (2007:2) in *Caring for Country* (The Second National Indigenous Land and Sea Management Conference 9-12 October) Program.

getting past first base is the need for each party to recognise and take on board their different positions. Only after working through this, when there is a genuine commitment of all parties to agree and to understand where each is coming from, can they move toward the next stage. Throughout the lengthy process of developing a workable management plan all parties need to be 'on the same page', having negotiated and agreed upon their common ground at the outset. See Appendix 1: A Socially Just Framework for Engagement (Nursesey-Bray 2005: 13).

Ngadjon Elders with Julian Hartley and Margaret Huxley

Together the Ngadjon Elders, Margaret Huxley and Julian Hartley produced the website *Ngadjonji... Rainforest People*. This comprehensive website was initially instigated by Margaret Huxley in concert with the Ngadjonji Elders in 1995. It was up and running from 1998 and later Julian Hartley became involved. The site is dedicated to Huxley (who passed away in 2004) and contains a vast array of material on Ngadjonji history, lands, places, culture, resource use, language and many other topics. It is accessible at the following address: <http://earthsci.org/aboriginal/Ngadjonji%20History/Introduction/history1.htm>

Wet Tropics Cultural Mapping and Knowledge Recording Projects

There are three significant cultural heritage recording projects being undertaken by Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics: They are the ARC's *Cultural Heritage Mapping Project*, Balkanu's *Traditional Knowledge Recording Project*; and Giringun Aboriginal Corporation *GIS and Cultural Heritage Database*. From 2002 the Balkanu and Traditional Knowledge Recording Project (TKRP) has been developing ways to assist Aboriginal people to manage their cultural and natural resources on country (Balkanu website 2007). In 2001 Kuku Yalanji elders and Balkanu staff worked on the *Wujal Wujal Kuku Yalanji junjuy junjuy Yalanji-nga Indigenous Knowledge of Biodiversity Project* from which a CD Rom was produced (WTAPPT 2005: 60). For more details on these projects refer to the discussion above in Section 4.2.3.

TABLE 1: SOME EXAMPLES OF PUBLICATIONS ON THE WET TROPICS BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND COLLABORATIONS WITH NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.

Author	Title	Type
Aboriginal people-Jumbun	<i>Aboriginal Life in the Rainforest.</i>	children's reader
Aboriginal people-Jumbun	<i>Aboriginal Tools of the Rainforest</i>	material culture; children's reader
Banning, R. and Quinn, M.	<i>Gidiri: A Djabugay story-water</i>	stories; language
Banning, R and Quinn, M.	<i>Djabugay ngirrma gulu</i>	grammar; language learning
Banning, R and Quinn, M	<i>Bulurru= Storywater</i>	language; stories
Banning, Rand Quinn, M.	<i>Warrma Gurrinan...</i>	language reader
Barlow, M.	<i>Jirrbal: Rainforest Dreamtime stories</i>	children's reader
Brim, B. <i>et al.</i>	<i>Buda: dji and the Greedy birds</i>	language; stories
Brim, C.	<i>Djabugay Children Today</i>	children's reader
Brim, W. and Eglitis, A.	<i>Creatures of the Rainforest...</i>	children; language; art
Davis, G.	<i>The Mullunburra...</i>	cultural practices, traditions
Djabugay Committee	<i>To Save the Knowledge...</i>	bush foods; medicine video
Fourmile, H.	<i>Using prior informed consent...</i>	consent, knowledge
Fourmile, H. <i>et al.</i>	<i>An Identification of Problems...</i>	technical report
Fourmile, T.	<i>Bajirriga the Turtle</i>	children's reader
Fourmile, T.	<i>How the Cassowary Got Its Helmet</i>	children's reader
Henry, G. J.	<i>Girroo Grrll</i>	local stories-reader
Hill, R. and Yalanji People	<i>Yalanji- Warranga Kaban ...</i>	local heritage
Holden, A. and Duffin, R.	<i>Negotiating Aboriginal Interests...</i>	technical paper
Jirrbal and Girramay	<i>Garrimal wuju Wabungga</i>	resources; language
Jirribal and Girramay	<i>Jaban buningga nyajun wabungga...</i>	food; language
Mallie, T.	<i>Combining the Old with the New...</i>	technical paper
McLeod, F. <i>et al.</i>	<i>Djabugay Language</i>	language
Martin, K.	<i>Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing</i>	technical paper; research models
Martin, K.	<i>Please Knock before you enter...</i>	PhD thesis; research protocols
Ngadjon Elders (<i>et al.</i>)	<i>Ngadjonji...rainforest people</i>	website-culture, heritage
Talbot, L.	<i>Indigenous Land Management...</i>	Masters thesis; collaboration

TABLE 2: SOME EXAMPLES OF PUBLICATIONS ON THE WET TROPICS BY NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.

Author	Title	Type
Abernethy, M	<i>Rainforest Aboriginal Shields...</i>	Grad Dip Material Culture thesis
Anderson, C.	a large and diverse number of publications	anthropology articles, thesis, reports
Bentrupperbäumer, J. et al.	<i>Mossman Gorge Community-Based...</i>	consultants' report
Bottoms, T.	<i>Djarrugan, the last of the nesting</i>	Master of Arts (Qualifying) thesis
Bottoms, T.	<i>The Bama</i>	history
Bottoms, T.	<i>Djabugay Country</i>	history
Brayshaw, H.	<i>Well Beaten Paths...</i>	historical study
Campbell, J.	<i>New Radiocarbon results...</i>	archaeology article
Campbell, J.	<i>Automatic seafood... systems (Hinchinbrook)</i>	archaeology article
Campbell, J.	<i>Settlement Patterns on Off-Shore islands...</i>	archaeology article
Chase, A. et al.	<i>Upper Yidinji Attachments to land...</i>	consultants' report (anthropology)
Collins, S.	<i>Mona Mona...</i>	Grad Dip Material Culture thesis
Cosgrove, R. F.	<i>A Stylistic and Use-Wear study of Ooyurka</i>	MA thesis; archaeology
Crothers, L.	<i>What's left after the plough? (Kennedy Valley)</i>	BA (Hons) thesis, archaeology
Dixon, R.	<i>The Dyirbal Language of North Queensland</i>	technical book; linguistics
Dixon, R.	<i>A Grammar of Yidin</i>	technical book; linguistics
Dixon, B.	<i>Searching for Aboriginal Languages: Memoirs...</i>	book for general public on fieldwork
Erbacher, J. and S.	<i>Aborigines of the Rainforest</i>	juvenile literature; Kuku Yalanji
Harris, D. R.	<i>Adaptation to a tropical rainforest environment...</i>	archaeology article
Hill, R.	<i>Collaborative environmental research...</i>	resource management article
Horsfall, N.	<i>Excavations at Jiye Cave...</i>	archaeology article
Horsfall, N.	<i>Theorising about Northeast Queensland Prehistory</i>	archaeology article
Horsfall, N.	<i>The Prehistoric Occupation of Australian rainforests</i>	archaeology article
Horsfall, N.	<i>Living in the Rainforest</i>	PhD thesis; archaeology
Horsfall, N. et al	<i>The Cultural heritage values of Aboriginal...</i>	consultants' report (arch/anthrop)
Johnston, K. (ed.)	<i>Artefacts of the Djabugay...</i>	children's reader
Kumm, E. A.	<i>Jumbun Lifestyle: Past and Present</i>	Grad Dip Material Culture thesis
Loos, N.	<i>Invasion and resistance</i>	history book
O'Connel, U.	<i>The Rainbow Serpent...</i>	anthropology article
O'Connel, U.	<i>Moon Legend from Bloomfield River</i>	anthropology article
Pedley, H.	<i>Plant detoxification in the rainforest...</i>	MA thesis; resource use
Pentecost, L.	<i>Girringun Aboriginal Corporation's Traditional...</i>	conference paper
Pentecost, L.	<i>An Assessment of the Deterioration factors...</i>	BA (Hons) thesis; archaeology
Quinn, M. et al.	<i>Djabugay: An Illustrated...</i>	dictionary; language learning
Quinn, M. et al.	<i>Gudju-gudju-biri-djada = Rainbow...</i>	stories; language
Savage, P.	<i>Christie Palmerston, Explorer</i>	diary of Palmerston in Wet Tropics
Sutherland, J.	<i>Mabo- Native Title in the...Wet Tropics</i>	legal article (Native Title)

5.2.1 Agreements and Protocols

“...protocols and guidelines such as those developed for the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement do not necessarily identify specific cultural protocols for each traditional owner group at the local level. Some Traditional Owner groups have already developed their own cultural protocols for how they want to be consulted and involved in projects on their traditional Country...it is important to identify what protocols have been developed and to work within their framework.”
(WTAPPT 2005: 109)

As discussed in 3.2, Codes of Ethics are important documents, but it is in working out research protocols and research agreements that the specifics of each research context can be more suitably addressed. In some cases the existing protocols held by Traditional Owner groups may be sufficient and in others they may serve as a baseline from which modifications are made. In his ethnobotanical work with *Wik* people at Aurukun, Nick Smith argues that research needs to have:

1. *A Community-based approach;*
2. *Access to a skilled facilitator;*
3. *Open and flexible process based on ‘normal’ activities;*
4. *Absence of a ‘scientific’ agenda;*
5. *Recognition of Aboriginal People as co-researchers and professional colleagues;*
6. *Respecting Aboriginal knowledge, political life and understandings;*
7. *Working within extant decision making processes;*
8. *Commitment to capacity building;*
9. *Non-extractive interaction;*
10. *Human focused projects; and*
11. *Working within extant community programs.”*

(Smith 2001: 45-47, quoted in Martin 2006: 57-58)

Below are several examples of protocols, research agreements and guidelines from the work of three different researchers who negotiated their research with Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics. The first is Karen Martin’s ‘Protocols for Research’ and her ‘Researcher Strategies for Self-Regulation’. The next examples come from Leah Talbot (2005), and the final examples from Melissa Nursey-Bray, which include her ‘Matrix of Practices and Performance Indicators’, and ‘Matrix of Benefits’. For her ‘Socially Just Conservation Framework for Engagement’ see Appendix 1.

Yura. Intha Booran Yeeaban. Intha Noonuccal, Quandamooka. Intha Bidjara.

I greet you. I am Karen Martin. I am a Noonuccal of Quandamooka. I am of Bidjara country.

I see you as the Buru Bama of Kuku Yalanji People.

I am new to Buru and come to work in a research project about how different Bama work together.

I have spoken to some Buru Bama and read about your goals to care for and protect Buru and your people.

This can be seen in the following rules:

- * Respect your land;
- * Respect your laws;
- * Respect your Elders;
- * Respect your culture;
- * Respect your community;
- * Respect your families; and
- * Respect your futures.

These rules are the same as my own people have. So as a visitor to your Bubu I will follow these rules and behave in a way that does not bring shame, harm or fear to you or to my own people.

I will obey these rules by respecting the following protocols:

- * Keep Buru as the main place for research, visits and meetings;
- * Ask permission before making visits to Buru;
- * Not move objects, nor take anything from Buru;
- * Not go anywhere unless I am taken by Buru Bama;
- * Give priority to the needs of Buru Bama and Community when doing this research;
- * Bring no alcohol or drugs into Buru;
- * Give full honour and recognition to the laws, customs and cultures of Buru Bama in this research and any work I do from it;
- * Keep Buru Bama informed of what I am doing and how I am doing this research;
- * Answer and questions Buru Bama want to know about this research;
- * Keep my word; and
- * Share what I know and have in ways to help Buru Bama meet their visions for their future.

If it is believed I am not behaving or respecting these rules and protocols there are three ways to restore this:

1. I agree to meet with your Elders or their representatives.

2. I will give you details for contacting:

- * Quandamooka Elders;
- * Chair of the Quandamooka Land Council;
- * My family (my eldest brother and my mother's sister daughter).

3. I also give you details of two staff members of James Cook University who know me and the research work I am doing:

- * My supervisor; and
- * The Head of the School of Indigenous Australian Studies.

These protocols are to guide the research I am doing in your Bubu. Through these, connections can be made between us, and for staying strong after the research.

FIGURE 4: "PROTOCOLS FOR RESEARCH" BY KAREN MARTIN AND BURUNGU ABORIGINAL CORPORATION 2002 DRAFT (IN MARTIN 2006).

**TABLE 3: KAREN MARTIN'S 'RESEARCHER STRATEGIES FOR SELF REGULATION',
DEvised FOR HER WORK WITH BURUNGU, KUKU YALANJI (2006: 186).**

Research Rule	Self-regulating Researcher Behaviour
Respect your land	Keep Buru as the main place for research, visits and meetings. Care for Buru lands, animals, plants and waterways. Not go anywhere unless I am taken by Buru Bama. Not move objects, nor take anything from Buru.
Respect your laws	Not go anywhere unless I am taken by Buru Bama. Give full honour and recognition to the laws, customs and cultures of Buru Bama in this research and any work I do from it. Answer any questions Buru Bama want to know about this research.
Respect your Elders	Bring no alcohol or drugs into Buru. Keep Buru Bama informed of what I am doing and how I am doing this research. Keep my word.
Respect your culture	Not move objects, nor take anything from Buru. Give priority to the needs of Buru Bama Community when doing this research.
Respect your community	Keep Buru as the main place for research, visits and meetings. Ask permission before making visits to Buru. Give priority to the needs of Buru Bama community when doing this research. Keep Buru Bama informed of what I am doing and how I am doing this research. Answer any questions Buru Bama want to know about this research. Bring no alcohol or drugs into Buru.
Respect your families	Ask permission before making visits to Buru. Give priority to the needs of Buru Bama community when doing this research. Bring no alcohol or drugs into Buru. Keep Buru Bama informed of what I am doing and how I am doing this research. Keep my word.
Respect your futures	Keep Buru Bama informed of what I am doing and how I am doing this research. Keep my word. Share what I know and have in ways to help Buru Bama meet their visions of the future.

**TABLE 4: LEAH TALBOT'S RESEARCH GOAL 1,
DEVELOPED WITH DJABUGAY SPEAKING PEOPLE (2005: 7).**

"To culturally and appropriately document Djabugay land management techniques which highlight their cultural and traditional links of managing their traditional country."	
Objectives	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight traditional land management techniques used by Djabugay to sustain, use and manage their natural resources and environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a relationship of trust and respect with Djabugay people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include verbal communication spent in and with the community group/s, etc.; Allow for authorisation processes and protocols for field visits and report contents, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile oral histories and traditional knowledge, as described by the Djabugay people, regarding traditional land management techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit field sites, locations of significance and importance and appropriate persons with the knowledge in order to record oral evidence and histories; Undertake semi-structured interviews in gathering oral information and histories; Use tapes, videos and cassette, note taking and interviews/discussions (where culturally appropriate).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and record significant cultural heritage values in Djabugay land management practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake field trips to Djabugay traditional lands in order for more effective transfer of knowledge and expertise relating to cultural significance, land management techniques and traditional history of Djabugay country.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the Djabugay people with compiled documented recordings of their land management knowledge, values, beliefs and lores. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis and any subsequent agreed publications.

**TABLE 5: LEAH TALBOT'S RESEARCH GOAL 2,
DEVELOPED WITH DJABUGAY SPEAKING PEOPLE (2005:8)**

“To assist where possible in facilitating the development and advancement of DTAC’s DEEP projects through the research of their own cultural and traditional information.”	
Objectives	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist in skills and knowledge transfer to younger people from the group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine an agreed work plan for field trips, identification of community skills base and knowledge, recording information and conducting workshops; Whilst undertaking field trips onto Djabugay traditional country, encourage capacity building amongst younger generations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist with future understandings in the wider community of Djabugay land management, culture and histories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate and/or facilitate when asked and where appropriate in community workshops, meetings, etc. where Djabugay peoples land, management and culture are discussed with non-Indigenous governments and organisations; Provide information and documented materials for Djabugay use in community workshops, meetings, etc. where Djabugay peoples’ land, management and culture are discussed with non-Indigenous governments and organisations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist with future understandings in the wider community of Indigenous land management techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide written material as a result of collation of traditional oral histories and relevant literature review which is primarily able to be utilised and understood by the Djabugay people themselves; If requested by the Djabugay people, provide published material for their use, understanding, future management and protection of their traditional country.

TABLE 6: "THE MATRIX OF PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS THAT GUIDED MY RESEARCH AT HOPE VALE" (NURSEY-BRAY 2006: 108, FIGURE 4.3.1).

Criterion of good research practice	Performance indicator
Accessibility of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of thesis in both academic and plain English forms.
Information housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return of transcripts, photos and information collected during research period to the community for archiving and access.
Acknowledgement in publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate acknowledgement given to Hope Vale community and its people in any output from the research (including public presentations, publications and meetings).
Sense of community ownership and understanding of project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Community Based Advisory Committee. • Use of community mentors for thesis. Close involvement of community during research proposal development stage, questions, interviews and collation processes.
Community benefits of project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return of information to community including: archival papers and photographs; collection of oral histories about hunting; general policy suggestions for hunting and management. Documentation of Indigenous views and aspirations regarding hunting and management. Greater recognition of Indigenous right to manage and hunt turtle and dugong.
Cultural Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of detailed research protocol.

TABLE 7: "MATRIX OF BENEFITS RESULTING FROM MY RESEARCH" (NURSEY-BRAY 2006: 126, FIGURE 4.71).

Recipient	Benefit	Outcome/ Product
Melissa Nursey-Bray	Increased skills and knowledge base and cross cultural understanding. Career enhancement.	PhD and publications.
Hope Vale Community	Negotiation forum. Community ownership. Information collection.	Video presentation returning PhD information back to community. Transcripts. Oral histories. Support and return of Lutheran Archives. Return of archival photos to Hope Vale Council in form of CD, album and booklets
CRC Reef / JCU / PhD Supervisors	Enhanced understanding of Indigenous values.	Co-authored publications Presentations, PhD.
Agencies	Enhanced understandings for application in management.	Background / policy paper.

TABLE 8: SOME USEFUL GUIDELINES, PROTOCOLS AND TOOLS FOR RESEARCHERS.

Source	Tool
Australian Heritage Commission	<i>Ask First: A Guide to Respecting Indigenous Heritage Places and Values</i> (http://www.ahc.gov.au/publications/indigenousheritage/index.html1#pdf)
AIATSIS (2000)	<i>Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies</i> (http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research_program/grants#package) Very comprehensive, covering most research situations.
CRC Torres Strait (2007a)	<i>Guidelines for Researchers</i> About communication and polite behaviour, contains some useful ideas. (http://www.crctorres.com/forcrctorres/index.htm)
CRC Torres Strait (2007b)	<i>Communication Planning For Researchers</i> (http://www.crctorres.com/forcrctorres/complan.htm)
Tropical Savannas CRC (2007b)	Research in progress on developing best practice research models
Evans <i>et al.</i> (2006)	<i>Guide to Participatory Tools for Forest Communities</i> Jakarta: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
IUCN (2000)	<i>World Commission on Protected Areas Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines</i>
Melissa Nursey-Bray and Hope Vale Community (Nursey-Bray 2006)	<i>Research Guidelines</i> , Appendix 3 in her PhD thesis.
Nursey-Bray (2006: 108 and 126)	<i>Matrix of Practices and Performance Indicators That Guided My Research at Hope Vale and Matrix of Benefits Resulting From My Research.</i>
Nursey-Bray (2005)	<i>A Socially Just Conservation Framework for Engagement</i>
Martin and Burungu Aboriginal Corporation (2006: 182)	<i>Protocols for Research. Draft.</i>
Martin (2006)	<i>Researcher Strategies For Self-Regulation (2006: 186)</i>
NH&RMC (2005)	<i>Keeping on Track: A Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples about Health Research Ethics.</i> (http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications) Describes the steps in the process of all research projects that “we need to follow in order to make the Research work for us” and to be involved all along the way. How to make research locally relevant, including small working groups, and training people.
Smallacombe <i>et al.</i> (2007)	<i>Scoping Project on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.</i> Report of a study for the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, Alice Springs

Source	Tool
Talbot (2005)	<i>The Aims; The Goals, Objectives and Strategies; The Guiding Principles; Chapter 3: Methodology.</i> pp. 6-9 and 30-53 in her thesis.
WTAPPT and CNRM Plan (2005)	Embedded in the comprehensive strategies and actions of the plan
WTMA (1998a)	<i>Wet Tropics Management Plan [Section 62 Guideline No. 3] Assessment of Permit Applications. Guidelines for Consulting Aboriginal People Particularly Concerned with Land in the Wet Tropics Area.</i>
WTMA (1998b)	<i>Wet Tropics Management Authority Protocol No 1-Interim Protocols for Aboriginal Participation in Management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.</i>
Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Community Council (1997)	<i>Protocols for Visits.</i> In: <i>Bama Wabu Which Way our Culture</i>

6. Discussion

6.1. Best Models: A Suite of Research Models for a Suite of Research Projects

The approach taken in this report is that ‘best practice’ and ‘best models’ are exemplified by research that best fits:

- Indigenous aspirations as expressed in, for example, *Caring for Country and Culture – The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan* (WTTAPT 2005);
- Indigenous aspirations as expressed in their local context;
- Indigenous and intergovernmental aspirations as expressed in, for example, the Wet Tropics Management Authority Regional Agreement, and
- Researchers’ aspirations.

The models need to be flexible enough to take into account the specific contexts of each project as well as new developments as they evolve. Keeping an eye on the potentialities and possibilities of new models in the future is important – there is always room for improvement, sometimes as ‘fine tuning’ and sometimes as a complete overhaul. What we consider best practice now will not be the case in five years’ time. And when a new piece of research is proposed it is crucial to know what has gone before, what has and hasn’t worked and the reasons why, and to build on that knowledge.

Just as Evans *et al.* (2006) delineate a suite of research tools to use in participatory research, depending on the actual project, and Cannella and Lincoln (2006) alert us to the need for a diverse rather than unitary code of ethical practices, there needs to be a range of research models to do justice to the vast range of topics and projects undertaken on resource use in the Wet Tropics (as demonstrated in WTAPPT 2005). This is a matter of scale, disciplinary focus and a myriad other factors. It’s crucial that these topics be covered in diverse ways with a spectrum of outcomes. One would expect to see a variety of projects falling along a continuum from ‘totally collaborative’ to ‘non-collaborative’, all involving a varying degree of community engagement.

Best practice models of research would also engage with the on-going and dynamic discussions about IP in general, its application to Indigenous Knowledge, non-Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights (e.g. Dodson 2007).

Crucial to developing ‘best practice’ in research is adherence to the AIATSIS *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies* and the development of appropriate protocols. Protocols and Research Agreements need to be sufficiently adaptive so they can be modified to reflect the contingencies of each research project. At base level they should be comprised of key principles which would remain non-negotiable. This could include the requirement that there be:

- Clear guidelines about the project and its purpose;
- Clear agreement to proceed;
- Mutual respect and mutual responsibilities of the researcher and the Aboriginal owners of the Wet Tropics;
- Cooperative and equitable approaches to research which demonstrate respect for Rainforest Aboriginal people’s intellectual and cultural property;

- Cooperative and equitable approaches to research which demonstrate respect for the intellectual property of researchers (be they Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal);
- Benefit-sharing;
- Clear agreement about the ownership and future uses of the research findings and data;
- Research which actively works towards 'bringing in' Indigenous or Traditional Knowledge with other forms of knowledge, namely the sciences or the social sciences;
- Foregrounding of rainforest Aboriginal people's rights and interests in the Wet Tropics, enabling their active involvement in the management of the World Heritage Area;
- An ongoing process of engagement;
- A commitment by all parties to disseminate research results in an appropriate way;
- The involvement of Aboriginal people from the very beginning of a project;
- A commitment of both parties to negotiate on equal terms;
- The ability for both parties to follow through with agreed outcomes;
- Processes to ensure that the right people to speak for country are consulted;
- Negotiations in an open and honest way;
- A commitment of both parties to work through difficulties together when they arise; and
- A clause to excuse either one or all parties from elements of the agreement should issues of conscience arise to which either party feels compelled to respond.

The NHMRC's *Keeping on Track: A Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples about Health Research* (2005) is an extremely helpful resource in this regard.

The protocols and research agreements developed by Drs Karen Martin (2006) and Melissa Nursey-Bray (2006) offer us examples of how best practice models of research protocols might be developed, especially if the findings of the Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project (IFaMP) on the need for high level skills in negotiation and conflict resolution (Bauman 2006; 2007) are factored in to the process.

There would be strong advantages in forging and maintaining institutional links and dialogue with bodies such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), museums, public libraries and archives. One of the advantages of working with an already well-established research body, such as AIATSIS, in which Indigenous concerns and Indigenous/non-Indigenous research is fundamental to their charter, is that a multiplicity of protocols developed by an ever-increasing number of organisations is reduced to a primary set of research protocols. This set can be continually worked on and modified through dialogue, both with the body itself and with representative members of the particular communities within which any proposed research is to be conducted. Further, such links with the above identified institutions would also assist in the refinement of models and management of projects, as well as developing a knowledge base on the location of materials about Aboriginal resource use in the Wet Tropics. While WTAPPT (2005) nominate strategies and actions in relation to Aboriginal material culture, this could be extended to include other archived materials in print, photographic, or audio formats.

Finally, best practice models of research would attend to the relations of power embedded in knowledge and the power relations which exist in the context of research. Nursey-Bray's (2005, 2006) analyses of the effects of power differentials in the negotiation of whole of government agreements with Aboriginal people over natural resource management (NRM) are especially salient.

6.1.1 Possible sticking points

In every research project there will be difficult issues to deal with. Facing the tension with an eye to resolving it and negotiating with the parties to work through the issues is a way of working productively with tension. Tension isn't always negative. Indeed Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, an advocate of collaborative research and of building respect, focusses on the misunderstandings and surprises of research, especially in the area of global connections and environmental change in Indonesia. She speaks of the:

"...zones of awkward engagement, where words mean something across a divide, even as people agree to speak. These zones of cultural friction are transient; they arise out of encounters and interactions." (Tsing 2005: xi)

In one chapter she describes collaborative projects in which difference of opinion is productive. She argues it is because of difference that members of a collaborative effort need to reach outside their usual positions and across to others in order to create understandings which overlap (2005: 246-7). Collaboration need not simply mean consensus – Tsing likes the idea of 'productive confusion'.

It is exceptionally rare for any research project to go smoothly and despite the best intentions of all parties, often someone will fail to uphold their end of the research agreement. This may be because the agreement was hastily signed, not skilfully brokered, there is a crucial misunderstanding, or because either one of the parties doesn't have the capacity they thought they had. Building-in protocols in research agreements for these contingencies would be advisable. They would establish a clear mechanism for the arbitration of the inevitable tensions or disputes as they occur (see also Thompson *et al.* 2005; Evans *et al.* 2006). An excellent, 'best practice' research process can be undermined by poor attitudes which is why mutual respect between all parties is crucial for a good outcome. This fundamentally depends on the discretion and integrity of the researcher/s and representatives of the Aboriginal group brokering the research.

Other tensions can arise because of tight time frames, budget limitations, or issues of researcher autonomy and conscience. Blaxter *et al.* (2006) discuss how researchers can feel constrained by interests within their research community. For example, being warned off controversial topics can be experienced as a loss of freedom, with research becoming 'safe' rather than accurate. Management of the project from the beginning to the end can also be a rocky road for the research community and researcher alike. The NHMRC's *Keeping on Track: A Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples about Health Research* (2005) is especially helpful here, clearly outlining the stages in a research project and the respective responsibilities of each of the research parties.

7. Recommendations

The WTMA Regional Agreement recognises the ‘rights and interests’ of Aboriginal people particularly in defining and negotiating

“...their own priorities, needs and aspirations for management of the Wet Tropics. A cooperative and equitable approach between World Heritage management agencies and Rainforest Aboriginal people is of vital importance in achieving these principles.” (WTMA: 2006)

and is committed to:

“...participation in policy, planning, permitting and management through a set of principles/ guidelines and very detailed protocols which outline appropriate ways to involve Rainforest Aboriginal people in World Heritage Management.” (WTMA 2006)

Drawing upon the desktop research conducted for this report, which includes the *Regional Agreement* and the *Aboriginal Plan*, the following recommendations are made that:

- i. There be an in-depth evaluation of the ways in which IK and TEK continues to be researched in relation to Western forms of knowledge (e.g. LINKS, NAILSMA, Tropical Savannas CRC);
- ii. Contemporary and changing positions on the protection of Intellectual and Cultural Property and Indigenous knowledge continue to be monitored (e.g. WIPO; local developments and applications);
- iii. The engagement of Traditional Owners in research could range from brokering a project to being involved as full partners at every stage;
- iv. The degree and nature of engagement will depend on a number of factors, including: the research project itself; the desire of Traditional Owners to be involved in each project; and the skills base of involved parties at the time;
- v. In each research project the potentials for collaborative research be explored, recognising that some research will not lend itself to full collaboration;
- vi. Consideration be given to the power differentials in negotiating agreements, especially whole of government agreements with Traditional Owners over natural resource management;
- vii. Consideration be given to establishing formal links with a number of research bodies committed to quality and respectful research being undertaken with Indigenous people in Australia, such as AIATSIS;
- viii. This be done with a view to ‘fine tuning’ research protocols and agreements, and for utilising their resources to access, store and/or repatriate data;
- ix. Consideration be given to ways in which the establishment of strong working relations, advisory relationships, and partnerships with statutory bodies in Australia and elsewhere, such as AIATSIS, universities and museums, could forge and maintain strong dialogue around the issues of repatriation, or at the very least, ready access to cultural materials from the Wet Tropics;
- x. Consideration be given to training a small number of Traditional Owners in the necessary research skills to enable them to trace and source cultural materials held in a number of places in Australia and elsewhere, and that this be an ongoing project possibly supported through Internships or scholarships (refer to actions 7.1 to 7.7 Strategy 7 WTAPPT 2005: 71);

- xi. Consideration be given to the findings of IFaMP on the need for highly trained and skilled, monitored and mentored Indigenous negotiators and 'process' specialists;
- xii. The *AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies* be adopted and that research agreements and protocols should be comprised of non-negotiable principles that there be:
 - clear guidelines about the project and its purpose;
 - clear agreement to proceed;
 - mutual respect and mutual responsibilities of the researcher and the Aboriginal owners of the Wet Tropics;
 - cooperative and equitable approaches to research which demonstrate respect for Rainforest Aboriginal people's intellectual and cultural property;
 - cooperative and equitable approaches to research which demonstrate respect for the intellectual property of researchers (be they Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal);
 - benefit-sharing;
 - clear agreement about the ownership and future uses of the research findings and data;
 - research which actively works towards 'bringing in' Indigenous or Traditional Knowledge with other forms of knowledge, namely the sciences or the social sciences;
 - foregrounding of rainforest Aboriginal people's rights and interests in the Wet Tropics, enabling their active involvement in the management of the World Heritage Area;
 - an ongoing process of engagement;
 - a commitment by all parties to disseminate research results in an appropriate way;
 - the involvement of Aboriginal people from the very beginning of a project;
 - a commitment of both parties to negotiate on equal terms;
 - the ability for both parties to follow through with agreed outcomes;
 - processes to ensure that the right people to speak for country are consulted;
 - negotiations in an open and honest way;
 - a commitment of both parties to work through difficulties together when they arise; and
 - a clause to excuse either one or all parties from elements of the agreement should issues of conscience arise to which either party feels compelled to respond.
- xiii. It be recognised that flexibility is critical to any research project, whether undertaken by Indigenous or non-Indigenous researchers, collaboratively or non-collaboratively;
- xiv. It be recognised there are key outcomes and benchmarks of every research project and where these change significantly there needs to be communication;
- xv. Models of 'co-research', 'transdisciplinary' research, cultural mapping and Indigenist research be seen as current and different 'best models' of research offering different angles, perspectives and outcomes; and finally
- xvi. Any 'best practice model of research' be seen as a work in progress.

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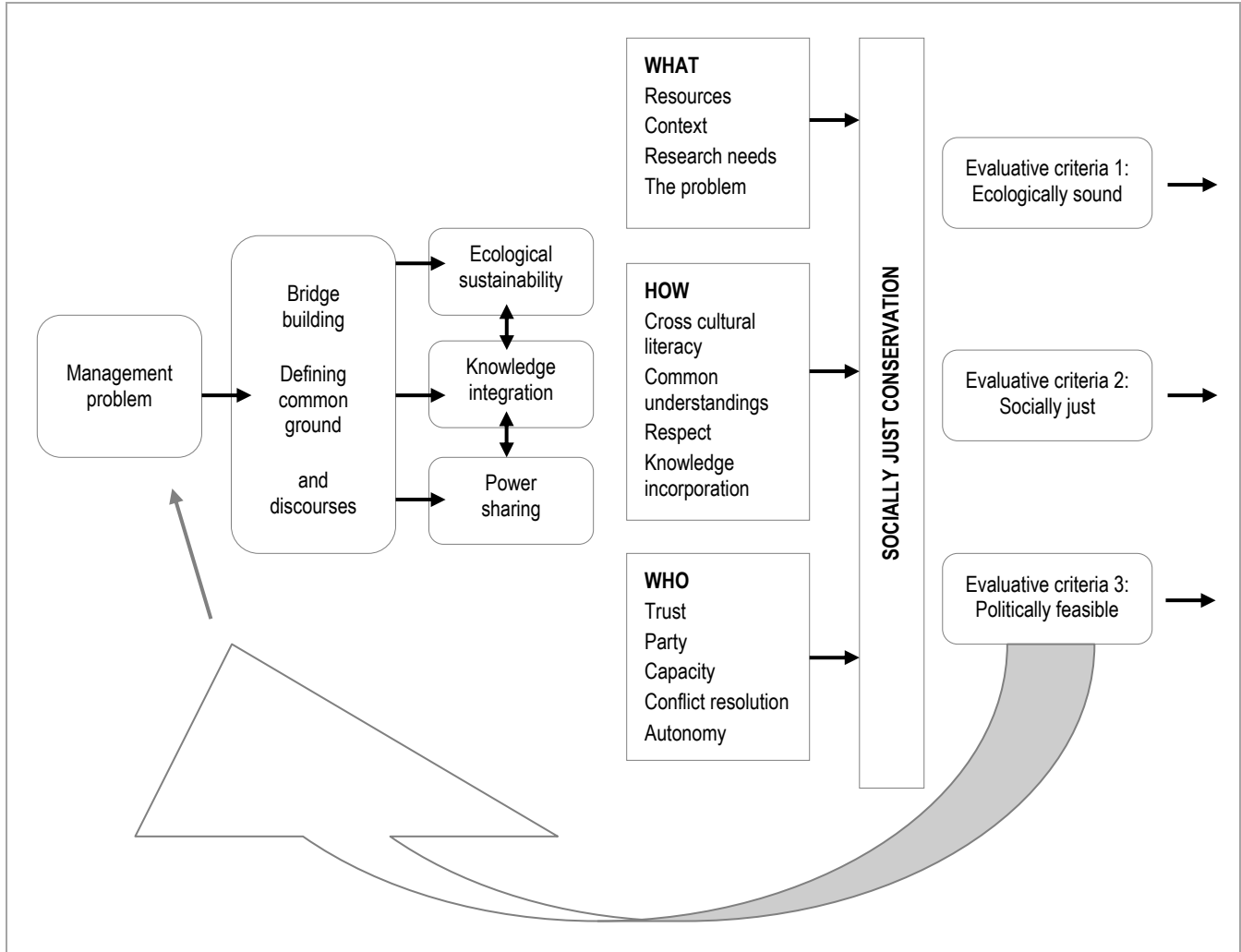
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Appendix 1: A socially just conservation framework for engagement

(Nursey-Bray 2005: 13)



Further Information

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